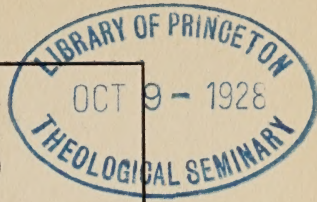


MEXICO  
PAST and PRESENT

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G. B. WINTON





# MEXICO

## *Past and Present*

BY  
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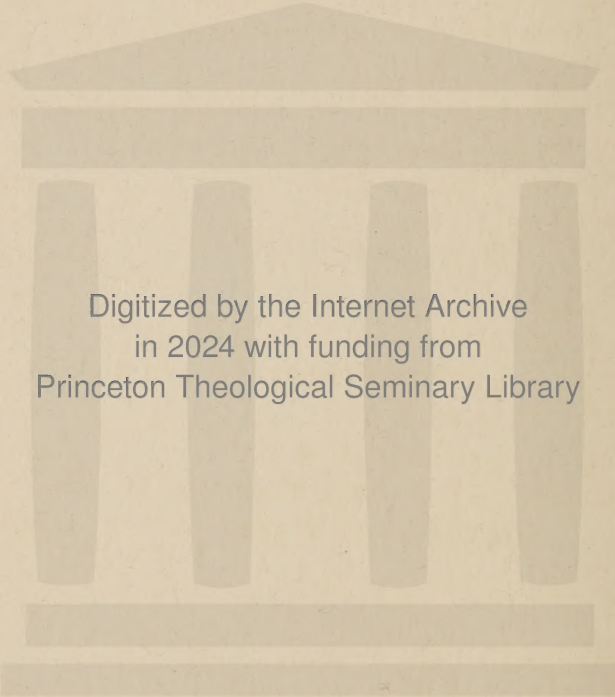
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To  
SAMUEL GUY INMAN  
FRIEND AND FELLOW  
STUDENT



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## FOREWORD

THIS is a volume not so much of history as of interpretation. It is surprising, and from time to time it threatens to become tragic, that so little is known by their immediate neighbors of Mexico and the Mexicans. Any effort to remedy this ignorance, to make our next-door neighbors better known, can scarcely fail to take some account of their history. The running story of the nation's life, herein contained, is presented, therefore, without apology. Had the author meant, however, to write history alone, the treatment would have been other than it is, and, in particular, the documentation made more careful and extended. In the statement of facts he trusts that he has been reasonably accurate, but will gladly welcome corrections. The interpretation is necessarily personal, and for that he accepts full responsibility.

G. B. W.

NASHVILLE, TENN., January 1, 1928.





# MEXICO, PAST AND PRESENT

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## CHAPTER I

### THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

FEW sections of the earth's surface containing the same number of square miles as Mexico have so great a variety of geographical conditions. On the whole, the country may be described as high, dry, and cool. This last adjective is sure to surprise those who have not made conditions there a study. Yet it is a fact that, even in summer, the climate of a large part of Mexico is often uncomfortably cool. The country is a great triangle, slightly curved like a cornucopia and spreading toward the north. Down either side, near the Gulf on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west, runs a high wall of mountains. The western range—Sierra Madre del Occidente, as it is called in Spanish—is a continuation of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. The eastern range corresponds in a general way with the Rocky Mountains, though lying farther to the east and not forming with them, by any means, an unbroken chain. These mountain ranges are a fence to the interior of the country, shutting off from it much moisture and the greater part of the boisterous weather of the coasts. They divide the whole topography of Mexico into three sections, with fairly

well marked distinctions of climate. The lands lying in these three altitudes—for it is mostly a question of altitude—are commonly spoken of as hot, temperate, and cool.

The hot lands, *tierras calientes*, are the lowlands. With the exception of a few valleys of the interior—gorges rather—which drop downward to levels so low that the tropical sun creates within them a tropical climate, these lands lie exclusively along the coast. They form a narrow band, widening a little at the northeastern corner of the republic into the lower valley of the Rio Grande, but, for the most part, less than a hundred miles in breadth, which extends around the edge of the whole republic, excepting, of course, the northern boundary. This band is a strictly tropical region, more than half of it lying south of the Tropic of Cancer. It is a flat and badly drained country, subject, for the most part, to heavy rains in their season and then to long periods of drought and heat. The vagaries of the trade winds leave much of it poorly watered, and its natural condition is that of a somewhat arid jungle alternating with marsh and sluggish streams. It is the habitat of countless varieties of pestiferous insects, of gaudy tropical birds without number, of wild game and wild cattle which hide in its jungles, and of comparatively few people.

Next above the hot country is what is spoken of as the temperate zone. It is not, for the most part, temperate so nearly as subtropical. It begins at an altitude of some three thousand feet, where the moisture flowing from the Gulf and from the Pacific

strikes against the swelling sides of the lofty mountain ranges and pours down a life-giving flood of rains. Frost rarely comes to this section, which, extending upward to five or six thousand feet of elevation according to the latitude, forms a zone of living green which belts the triangle of the republic from the northeast around by the south and up the west side. Similar conditions, with slight variations as regards rainfall, obtain in the interior of these high mountain ranges, especially toward the north, where the interior plateaus are usually less than five thousand feet in altitude. These temperate lands, so called, are the home of the orange and, in the south, of the coffee berry. Their abundant vegetation and countless and gorgeous flowers, as well as the splendid scenery, due to the fact that for the most part this zone lies on the mountain sides, make these lands ideally beautiful. The very fact, however, that it is mostly but a belt on the slope of the mountains reduces the territory within this zone which is arable to such a degree that the population which it supports is necessarily limited. Where the topography and latitude allow, bananas and oranges, as well as many other fruits, coffee, and certain grains of the temperate zone, may be cultivated to great advantage.

Beginning in the same altitudes with the *tierra templada*, and extending upward to the valley regions from eight to ten thousand feet above sea level, is the *tierra fría*, or cold country. The word applied with exactness would signify only those very high plateaus and mountain sides where frost must be contended with and vegetation is at a grave disadvan-



tage. In practice, however, most of the lands of the great interior plateau, which has an average altitude of about six thousand feet, are spoken of as the *tierra fría*. Some geographers, on the other hand, insist that this region is, properly speaking, the temperate zone—certainly a more exact description of it in English. Its products are precisely those of that section of the earth's surface usually spoken of as the temperate zone. It is true that they are modified in a large measure by the circumstance that this region in Mexico is an interior and arid plateau. The development of vegetable life is not simply a question of the proportion between heat and cold. Other influences must be taken into the account, notably the question of rainfall and of the relative temperature of night and day.

This great plateau of Mexico conforms in general outline to the triangular shape of the country itself. It has been, from the beginning of its history, the home of the bulk of Mexico's people. Cut off by the high fence of mountains on either side from the moisture of the seacoast region, it is a land of abundant sunshine and equable climate. The rainfall over most of its area is not sufficient for anything like heavy vegetation. The water supply is further limited by the circumstance that this rainfall is confined to three or four summer months known as the rainy season. Since the stratification of the rocks underlying most of Mexico's interior has been greatly broken and tilted from the horizontal by heavy volcanic action, there are on this high table-land comparatively few perennial springs and almost no

permanent running streams. Over the greater part of its surface crops of Indian corn and beans, of wheat, barley, and other grains may be raised with more or less certainty without irrigation. Wherever running streams or carefully hoarded rainfall can be taken advantage of for the purpose of irrigation, crops are absolutely assured. The unfailing sunshine and the remarkable fertility of the rather sandy and rocky soil, which does not appear to be fertile, give abundant reward when the labor of the husbandman is supplemented by the water supply, which is the one absolutely essential requisite. So essential, indeed, is it that, in certain sections of Mexico, it is the custom in transferring agricultural lands to sell the water right and let the land go with it.

In a general way it may be said of Mexico's highlands that the rainfall, and with it the possibility of human habitation, increases toward the south. At its northern extremity the plateau is wide and dry. Somewhat lower than at the south, its climate is warmer, and the wide plains are so scorched by the ardent sun that they are valuable chiefly as pasture lands. Toward the southern extremity the whole land grows narrower, and the moist winds from either side more frequently sweep over the mountain tops to water the plains within. The mountains also there are mostly covered with heavy vegetation, and from them flow streams which are usually soon dissipated in irrigating the wide plains. Into this narrower and more mountainous section toward the southern apex of the table-land are gathered most of the cities of the republic. Many of them have

grown up around rich deposits of mineral, though their permanent prosperity would have been impossible without the food supply which comes from the neighboring plains.

As would be naturally inferred, these interior plains, high, dry, and cool, are, in so far as concerns the conditions of climate and health, an almost ideal place for the habitation of man. The climate is equable, the temperature rarely falling to the freezing point and never reaching sultriness from heat. Indeed, the air is so dry and crisp that on the warmest days one has but to enter a house or the shade of a tree to be instantly comfortable.

Above the general outline of the two mountain ranges, which are rarely above twelve thousand feet in height, shoot upward three or four great volcanic peaks. Two of these, the best known perhaps, stand sentinel over the valley in which the City of Mexico lies. Between Popocatépetl and Ixtaccíhuatl marched the Spaniards under Cortés, and from the high pass which unites these snow-covered peaks they looked downward to the west upon one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. The panorama is a splendid one still, though the advance of civilization has filled the limpid air about the City of Mexico with dust and smoke. On either side of the country stands a mountain looking out to sea. One peak, Colima, constantly sends forth a banner of smoke which may be seen far out on the Pacific. From time to time it becomes an active volcano pouring out ashes and flame. On the east, Orizaba, eighteen thousand feet high, in shape an almost perfect cone,



clothed with four thousand feet of perpetual snow, stands bathing its feet in the tropic sea by Vera Cruz. It is like Fujiyama in Japan in the circumstance of running the whole gamut of vegetation from the sea level to the snow line. It also resembles Japan's famous peak in the perfection of its symmetry. It excels it in range, however, as it stands so far south that the vegetation at its base is strictly tropical. It also overtops it several thousand feet in height. Besides these more noted peaks is the volcano of Toluca, as it is called, whose ragged and narrow crater, seamed with lava set off by a tracery of snow, looks down upon the thriving little capital of the state of Mexico. These snow-capped mountains add a finishing touch to the romantic and attractive scenery of Mexico—a country which supplies a greater variety of natural growths and of scenic effects than any other on the North American continent, or perhaps in the world.

From the beginning of its history Mexico has been known as rich in minerals. It was the rumored abundance of gold and other precious metals which lured on the Spaniards there as well as in the other countries which became the scenes of their adventurous invasions. Yet both previous to the conquest and at the present time the chief resources of Mexico have been agricultural. By virtue of its surprising variety of climate, nearly all the products of both the tropic and the temperate zone find their home in some part of the republic. The chief reliance of its people for food has ever been Indian corn. The discovery of this cereal by the Europeans who came to

America has added vastly to the well-being of the world. Mexico is also the native habitat of the tomato, the potato, the cacao bean, the vanilla plant, the turkey, and the tobacco plant.

The primitive method of availing themselves of Indian corn is still in vogue among the people of that country. The grain is soaked in weak lye or a solution of lime till the outer coat is softened and partially dissolved. It is then washed, and, while still moist, crushed between two stones. The nether millstone of this primitive mill is a flat slab, set in a sloping position, over which the upper millstone, instead of being turned, is rubbed back and forth. The product of the grinding is not meal, but dough, which is then patted thin and baked over an open fire without salt or other condiment. This *tortilla* (little cake) is the food of the bulk of Mexico's population. Next in order of economic value for the feeding of the people comes the bean (*frijol*). The brown bean, of several species, which is cultivated throughout the whole country, both lowlands and highlands, is boiled and eaten to the accompaniment of the thin corn cakes. If the family is well to do, these boiled beans are also fried in lard before being served. It is an extremely poor man whose dinner consists of only one of these two elements. Yet one or both of them is sure to appear on the table of even the wealthiest and most cultured of Mexican families.

In some of the highlands, where the conditions of soil are favorable, wheat is sown. More generally still, on account of its hardness in resisting cold, is planted barley. The green splotches that the chance

traveler will see far up the sides of the high mountains toward the timber line are usually of barley. It can be coaxed to an altitude several hundred feet higher than the hardiest varieties of Indian corn. In the tropical and subtropical regions of Mexico sugar cane is extensively grown. Also, where conditions favor—that is to say, where a sufficiency of water can be obtained—in the tropical sections rice culture is beginning to be common. The cultivation of cotton, which always commands a high price in Mexico on account of its universal use among the laboring people for clothing, has been greatly hampered in recent years by the ravages of the boll weevil.

Besides these products common to other lands, there are one or two almost peculiar to Mexico, which are of notable economic value. The principal of these, as regards at least the value of its product, is the maguey, or agave, often called the century plant. This plant, of the family of the aloe, produces an enormous quantity of starchy growth from which may be extracted alcoholic liquors. In the regions adjacent to Mexico City it is the juice of the plant, slightly fermented and called pulque, which is consumed. In other sections the alcohol which the plant contains is extracted by distillation and goes under the name of mezcal, or tequila. These latter liquids are heavily charged with alcohol and very deleterious in their effects if drunk freely. This same plant, with one or two other related species, furnishes a very fine fiber which is coming to be a commercial product of no little value.

This fiber is called *ixtle*. Closely related with the plants producing it is the henequen, which is a species of maguey. Its fiber is used in binder twine. There are other fibrous plants in Mexico which will be utilized in future, when their merits are properly known. One of their products of special merit is a fine grade of paper. So far the development and utilization of these fibers have languished somewhat for lack of satisfactory machinery for the extraction of the fiber from the succulent leaves.

Within recent years much attention has been drawn to the cultivation of coffee in Mexico. Coffee, rubber, and oranges have been the occasion of many investments on the part of foreigners; it may be added, also the occasion of many disappointments. All these, including also bananas, are so exacting in their requirements of climate, soil, and cultivation that the sum total of the conditions necessary for their exploitation is hard to obtain. And often, when it is obtained, there is a vital defect in the situation caused by lack of transportation facilities. The coffee plant is extremely sensitive to cold. It must be protected also from the tropical sun. It must have a liberal supply of water. The berry, when mature, requires most careful handling; and, after all, it may be found that the soil, in a section where all these conditions are satisfactorily met, is such that the product is deficient in flavor. Like tobacco, there is an elusive somewhat in coffee, imparted by a certain savor and delicacy of soil, which can only be discovered by experiment and can by no means be duplicated where conditions are



unfavorable. There are a few sections in Mexico which produce coffee of a very high grade. Unfortunately, those yielding the best quality are extremely limited and so situated that extensive cultivation is impossible.

The raising of citrous fruits and bananas will probably be greatly developed in the future. Oranges and lemons will stand the somewhat rougher climate of the high plateau, and there are extensive regions of the flat tropical jungle that might be profitably cultivated in bananas. The lack of transportation has hitherto limited the production of all these various fruits, and the clog of import and export duties has not encouraged the shipping of Mexico's products to other countries. Of late years their shipment to the United States has been prohibited because of the danger of plant diseases. The cultivation of the rubber plant—or plants, for there are several—is still in its experimental stage and confined to the southern extremity of the republic. The difficulties to be solved have to do chiefly with the labor supply and the matter of transportation. The climate where these plants will grow is unhealthful and enervating for the white races. The Mexicans native to that section are averse to physical exertion, and up to the present no satisfactory plan for supplying the necessary manual labor has been devised. The transportation facilities are for the most part equally inadequate.

The mineral wealth of Mexico has been notorious through all its history. In silver, especially, it has excelled, having produced a quantity of this metal

during the time of the Spanish occupation which is simply prodigious. Some mines seem inexhaustible still. From time to time new ones are discovered. Within recent years old and abandoned workings have been reopened by virtue of modern and economical processes of reduction. In gold it is not quite so rich, though the annual output is of considerable value. Copper and quicksilver form important elements in the total mineral product of the country. It has iron mines in only a few places. But one of its deposits of this metal, the iron mountain at the side of the city of Durango, is one of the most famous in the world. It is a longitudinal hill, about a mile long and four or five hundred feet high, composed of almost absolutely pure magnetic iron ore; the largest single lump, it is believed, in the world. A large plant for the production of commercial steel has for several years been in operation in Monterrey.

Since the early part of the sixteenth century, the population of Mexico has been made up principally of three elements. Occupying the superior place among these, in wealth, education, and power, have been the Spaniards and their pure-blooded descendants. For a time these were not counted one class, but were divided into Spaniards and creoles—that is, those who had actually been born in Spain and their descendants born in “New Spain,” as it was then called. Very early in the history of the relation of the Spaniards with Mexico began the habit of intermarriage with the native population. The children of mixed blood, called mestizos, have mul-

tiplied with the passing of the years until, at present, they form a second large element in the population. The third, a sort of substratum, as it were, is found in the native races. The Indian tribes of Mexico were quite numerous at the time of the conquest, one usually reputable authority placing the population at sixteen millions.

Taking up these several classes in their inverse order, the first thing to be said of the Indians is that their origin is shrouded in mystery. Physical and linguistic peculiarities point to a kinship with the Pueblo Indians of Arizona and California. There are certain racial indications which hint vaguely of connection with the Japanese. It would not be a difficult supposition to explain the presence of these peoples on the western coast of America by the coming of some prehistoric clan across the ocean on the warm Japanese current. The traditions of the Mexicans point, almost without exception, to the north as the direction from which their fathers migrated to the Mexican plateau. There is little doubt that those early peoples, who marked the valleys of Arizona with their irrigation canals and left their dwelling places to puzzle the archæologists of our day among the barren cliffs of the New Mexico mountains, were connected with the tribes which, later migrating toward the south, built up the civilization of the valley of Mexico.

Just which were the aboriginal tribes of Mexico cannot be clearly made out. Ethnologists of that country who have made the subject a matter of study hold that at least three separate migrations

swept over the greater part of the southern end of the plateau. Some believe that the first of these came from the south, its tribes identical with the highly civilized peoples found by the Spaniards in Peru. It seems more likely however, that the Indian traditions are correct and that, one after another, the early tribes came down the Pacific coast, across the Sierra Madre del Occidente, and thus into the highlands of the interior, where each left traces of its occupancy.

Among the earliest of these were the Mayas. This tribe has left most of its more notable monuments on the peninsula of Yucatan, into which low and sultry region it was forced by a more warlike and less civilized tribe, which later took its place and defaced its records on the central plateau. In Yucatan there are to this day extensive remains in architecture and hieroglyphic inscriptions which testify to an advanced stage of civilization on the part of the Mayas. The language has been preserved in a somewhat fragmentary form, but all attempts to decipher the picture writing hidden away in the jungles of Yucatan and Central America have been unsuccessful. After the Mayas came the Nahoas, the most prominent tribe of which division were the Toltecs. It is true that some writers believe that the Mayas themselves were of the general division called Nahoa, though there is so much confusion as to their language and history that nothing definite has been determined.

The Toltecs and other better-known tribes of the Nahoa division unhesitatingly traced their origin to



the west, their early traditions plainly teaching that their tribe reached the interior plateau from the direction of the Pacific. Their traditions, to which the early historians give the weight of history—and, indeed, they did exist at the time of the conquest in a sort of picture writing—trace the whole itinerary of the migration from southern California to the valley of Mexico. There they rapidly developed the arts of civilization. The tribes of this division of aborigines appear to have been of a pacific temper. It seems quite within the range of probability that their migration from the valley of the Gila River was due to the pressure upon them there of savage neighbors. The elaborate plans for protecting their homes and the products of their labor which may yet be seen in the cliff dwellings of Arizona point in the same direction. They were an agricultural people, not inclined to the barbarities of war. In Mexico, however, thrown into contact with the robust and energetic tribes which had preceded them, notably the Zapotecs and Mixtecs—fragments of a general racial division made by some historians under the name of Mecas—they developed a vigorous national life. The period of their greatest prosperity was only a very brief time preceding the arrival of the Spanish. They had extensive and well-built cities at Tollan (Tula)—from which place was derived the name Toltecs—Cholula, and Teotihuacan. They understood the raising and manufacture of cotton, wore clothes, hats, and sandals, and were a tall, sprightly people, devoted still to agriculture and pacific pursuits rather than to war.

From some uncertain quarter, apparently the west, came a migration, immediately succeeding the Toltecs, which built up upon the fragments of their cities a vigorous military government. When these were about to reach the summit of their civilization and strength, the third or, as some believe, the fourth general migration reached the central Mexican plateau from the west. These were a group of five or six tribes, called by some historians Nahuatlacas. The most famous of these tribes later became the Aztecs, who derived their name from having migrated from Aztlan, or "land of herons." This name doubtless referred to some laguna toward the west of what is now Mexico, some think to Lake Chapala in the state of Jalisco.

The Aztecs have become for modern times the typical Mexicans. The facts of the case, however, seem to be that they and their sister tribes reached the valley of Mexico, then inhabited by a mixture of Toltecs, Otomis, Chichimecs, etc., after having fought their way through numerous settlements farther west, with nothing in the way of civilization except a tolerably perfect tribal organization, tremendous racial vitality, and a warlike temper, which latter proved to be their chief asset in first making a place for themselves among the civilized tribes about them and later making a fierce stand against the Spanish invaders. Upon their arrival in the valley of Mexico they were so exhausted from constant traveling and fighting that they were forced to take refuge upon a rocky island in Lake Texcoco. There they built themselves huts of reeds and lived on the

fish and game in which the lake abounded. The soothsayer of the tribe had settled upon this island because he found there what had been indicated as the final resting place of their migration, a Mexican eagle sitting on the flag leaf of a nopal cactus (*opuntia*) devouring a snake. This symbol has become the Mexican coat of arms.

The Chichimecs, a warlike people themselves, had rapidly absorbed enough of Toltec civilization to develop a vigorous government. It was somewhat of the nature of a kingdom, though the king—or kings, for frequently there were more than one—was really no more than an Indian sachem. But as the wealth of the people increased and their tribal cities became more extensive and substantial, the naked warriors who had formerly taken the field with bow and spear came to understand the military strength which inheres in the substantially built city. Thus their larger towns soon came to be military centers, and the tribute which they exacted from the neighboring tribes increased the wealth of the governing bodies and made military organization and a standing army possible. Their principal city, important previous to the conquest, was Texcoco.

Meantime, the Aztec tribe, warriors to begin with and made all the harder by their life as hunters and fishermen on the lake, rapidly multiplied and began to make inroads upon the agricultural regions adjacent. Their reed huts gave place to more substantial buildings of adobe, and later even of stone. Whether they brought with them the skill in the builder's art which made such progress possible, or

whether, as seems more probable, artisans came to them from the neighboring cities, especially those representing the then downtrodden but somewhat highly civilized Toltecs, it is impossible to determine. At any rate, whether by virtue of their own skill in the arts of peace and war or by means of what they learned from their neighbors, their island city rapidly grew into a vigorous stronghold, soon rivaling, in both wealth and military strength, the neighboring capital of the Chichimecs. For a time these rival governments engaged in fierce conflicts. Later, peace was made by the intermarriage of what had now become the royal families. By the time the Spaniards came, the reigning chief of the Aztecs was the practically undisputed ruler of the whole valley of Mexico and of numerous tribes in the neighboring mountains, which preferred accepting his rule to risking an invasion by his warriors.

Besides those already mentioned there were, at the time of the conquest, two or three other extensive families of aborigines, of some of whom distinct strains remain to this day. The principal of these were the Tarasco Indians, inhabiting the mountainous region west of the lower end of the plateau now embraced in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán. These number, it is believed, even yet some three hundred thousand and are physically of a small but robust and vital type. They had not acknowledged the authority of the Aztec emperor, but had a king of their own, with a capital and numerous other towns and cities. They were a pacific and agricultural people, whom Cortés reduced to subjection



through a trick played upon their king. Besides these were the mountain Indians of the eastern Sierra Madre, now known under the general designation of Huastecas. There were also the numerous scattering and somewhat vagrant tribes of the dry plains of the central northern part of the country, drifting back and forth from Mexico into what is now the United States.

Such were the ancestors of the native Mexican. They were Indians in the sense that they were aboriginal Americans, but they bore only a slight resemblance to the Indians of the Mississippi valley and the Atlantic seaboard. It is difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy what proportion of the inhabitants of Mexico to-day are pure-blooded descendants of these Indian ancestors. So easily did the native tribes mingle with the European invaders, and so slight is the difference in complexion and general appearance between the native Mexican and the swarthy sons and daughters of southern Spain, that the strains of relationship at the present day are about as intricate in Mexico as in the United States. Just as here Huguenots, Germans, Scandinavians, English, Irish, and the rest, have been fused into one homogeneous race, so in Mexico Spaniard, creole, mestizo, and Indian have become inextricably confused. There is, however, as I have already said, the general division into three sections—namely, the people of more or less pure European blood, those of mixed blood, and the full-blood Indians.

The Indians who live in the high mountainous

sections and have preserved their languages and customs are, in many instances, doubtless full-blood Indians still. So also many families of wealth and social position have kept their European blood intact. This has been largely by the accident of association and local influences rather than of purpose. There is practically no prejudice among the Mexican people either for or against the amalgamation of the races. Families that are of purely Spanish descent take no special pride in it, but speak of themselves simply as Mexicans. Those, on the other hand, who have mixed or purely Indian parentage often plume themselves upon it. Many of the great men of the country have been Indians. This stock has exhibited and still exhibits every element which goes to make up the best there is in humanity. In view of the oppression and degradation which the Spaniards deliberately inflicted upon the Indians in the earlier centuries of their contact with them, it is scarcely short of marvelous that the native stock should have shown so much of vitality both in numbers and in producing its proportionate share of the great men of Mexican history.

With reference to the people of mixed blood, it must be confessed that they often exhibit the well-known tendency to follow the vices and weaknesses of both sides of their ancestry rather than their virtues. This has been due, however, not solely to the accident of blood. Their anomalous position in the nation has had its effect. The Spaniards and their descendants have been to some extent a caste. Indians who are Indians, especially since Mexico

achieved her independence, are proud of it and hold doggedly to their racial integrity. They are also, to a large extent, agriculturists and lead the hardy and independent life of sons of the soil. Between these two extremes are the people of mixed blood, who form the bulk of the population of most towns and cities. They are the servants, the artisans, and the detached element in the population generally, without the strengthening influences of wealth or family position and subject to the insidious temptations which beset a servile class. They should constitute the great middle class of the people. But Mexican society has for four hundred years been organized in such a way as to eliminate the middle class. Those, therefore, who should by rights be members of it are constantly oscillating between attainment to the standing and privileges of the ruling class and subjection to the accepted poverty and submission of the lower. They affect to despise manual labor, a weakness inherited from Spain that has always been exhibited by the upper class in Mexico, and thus often undertake to live by their wits when they should depend on honest toil. The thievery and general unreliability which are frequently harshly attributed to the whole Mexican people have really grown out of this unsettled position of a large element in the population of the cities and towns. The Federal census of 1900 estimated that the Indians constituted thirty-eight per cent of the population, the people of mixed blood forty-three per cent, and those of pure European blood nineteen per cent. A more recent (unofficial) estimate (1912) is, mes-

tizos 55 per cent, Indians 33 per cent, creoles 12 per cent.

The Spanish language is in general use throughout the country. A few of the Indian tribes still speak their native languages, and many individuals among them, especially in remote mountain regions, are ignorant of Spanish. But with one or two exceptions these languages have not been reduced to writing, and even when this has been done the slender opportunities for culture open to the Indians have prevented any notable literary use of them. The result is that Spanish is the language of the literature and business affairs of the whole country, the Indian dialects lingering stubbornly nevertheless. Some of these—the Aztec, or Mexican, the Otomí, the Tarascan, and the Huastecan, among others—are well-organized languages, quite capable of a flexible and literary use. The Spanish one hears in Mexico is pure Spanish, though exhibiting one or two slight peculiarities in the pronunciation and having in common use a large number of Indian terms, together with not a few provincialisms.

In their manner of life, both in city and country, the Mexicans have much in common with the people of western Asia and northern Africa. So manifest is the resemblance to the latter that, taken with certain traits of the stone carving and architecture of the pre-European period, it has suggested to many a racial connection with Egypt. The ingenious theories propounded to account for this, such, for example, as the revival of the myth about the



buried continent of Atlantis, have not commended themselves to careful students. It seems more probable that such resemblances as antedated the coming of the Spanish were purely accidental and that the rest are to be accounted for by the strong Moorish influence in Spain about the time of the conquest of Mexico and the similarity in climatic conditions between the dry mesas of Mexico and the arid plateaus east and south of the Mediterranean. The domestic animals, the utensils, the pastoral atmosphere and phraseology, the manner of building houses, stables, granaries, sheepfolds, and the like, are all so similar to what obtained in Palestine two thousand years ago that a visit to Mexico serves as an instructive commentary on the Bible.

When the Aztecs arrived and, under the direction of their medicine men, settled upon a rocky island in Lake Texcoco, they found themselves in a region claimed by their cousins the Tecpanecas. These had developed a vigorous government with a king or chief in Atzcapotzalco. The Aztecs accepted allegiance under this king, paying tribute each year of fish and ducks from the lake.

Meantime, other branches of this same migration having settled adjacent to the capital city of the Chichimecs, Texcoco, situated on the eastern side of the lake, for a time admitted the sovereignty of its king. Later, when they had grown strong and self-reliant, they threw off his authority, fought among themselves, and brought on a period of great confusion. Then a shrewd Chichimec king adopted some

new-comers of the same stock into his tribe, married his sons with their daughters, and thus braced his tottering throne by a hardy, civilized, and warlike addition to the population. Such was the state of affairs when the Aztecs, tiring of their position of subjects to the king of Atzcapotzalco, and having themselves grown numerous and built up their island city—which they called Tenochtitlán—elected a king or chief of their own and forced the Tecpanecas to recognize them as allies instead of subjects. It was not long, of course, before war broke out between them and the king of Texcoco. Their capitals were on the same lake, not far apart, and irritating conflicts of authority were not wanting. So fierce and successful were the Aztec warriors, under young Moctezuma, that they soon vanquished the Chichimec king and began to force their way to the very front among the various tribes of the valley of Mexico.

During something like fifty years, the latter part of the fifteenth century, they were engaged in a series of bloody wars, mostly wars of conquest. So fierce and arrogant did they become that if a tribe dared to offer resistance to their arms, or refuse tribute to their king, nothing prevented their going at once to reduce it, unless it was at such a distance from their capital as to make the expedition seem futile. The huge multitudes of captives which they brought back from their forages seem to have been the original prompting of the bloody rite of human sacrifice which so shocked the Spaniards on their arrival a little later. Something had to be done

with these captives. Many became slaves and colonists. Others were too brave and dangerous to be left alive. Nothing was more natural than that a warlike people should have as one of their deities a God of War. So by easy stages came about the sacrifice of war prisoners to him. Some even suspect that these bloody rites involved cannibalism. If so, it was of the nature of a religious ceremony. There is no reason to believe that the high-minded warriors of Mexico ever ate human flesh because it pleased them as an ordinary article of diet.

The human sacrifices were a sad and bloody affair. Only the heart of the victim was offered, and it was believed to be more acceptable living than dead. Hence the ceremony consisted in extracting and holding it up before the gruesome image while still throbbing. For this purpose the condemned prisoner was held upon his back on a huge stone, one of which is still to be seen in the National Museum, his head strained downward by a heavy stone yoke on his neck, while the officiating priest opened his chest with an obsidian knife, rudely tearing out the palpitating heart. The Spanish priests and soldiers, with that fondness for exaggeration which never forsook them, gave most unreasonable and impossible estimates of the number of victims thus sacrificed from time to time.

Moctezuma from being the commanding general of the army was later made king, since he was of royal blood. After extending the power of his tribe throughout almost the entire valley, he died in 1469 and was succeeded by his grandson, Ax-

ayacatl. After twelve years, Tizoc, brother of Ayacatl, succeeded him and began the construction of a new and sumptuous temple to the God of War, Huitzilopochtli. Dying himself of poison in 1486, he left the conclusion of it to his younger brother and successor, Ahuitzatl (beaver). Having, according to a custom, waged a campaign of conquest to celebrate his accession, this new king brought back a swarm of prisoners to be victims in honor of the dedication of the temple. The chroniclers would have us believe that twenty thousand (some go as high as eighty thousand) were sacrificed. The number is not merely incredible; it is simply impossible. A brief calculation on the terms of their own narrative, which says the ceremonies lasted four days, will show that the number of victims could not have gone beyond three or four thousand.

This dedication of the temple of the War God took place in 1487. The vast concurrence of people, the shedding of so much blood, the throwing out to decay of so many corpses, the general excitement and relaxation of the occasion, produced, so it seemed, and so it may well be believed, a wholesale demoralization of the capital city, ending in a pestilence. Such a religious festival was a melancholy degeneration from the clean and wholesome rites by which the Toltecs, and even the ancestors of the Aztecs, a peaceful and agricultural community, adored the sun as the origin of their blessings and offered to him the first fruits of their harvests.

Five years later Columbus touched the shores of the New World. The savage and warlike monarch



who had presided over this dedicatory ceremony, slaying himself the first victim, had continued his course of war and conquest. His people learned to work in the soft stone which was discovered near the shore of their lake about that time and built still more ample and substantial edifices in the capital city. In 1499 it was a victim of one of the great rain storms that visit that region from time to time. The other lakes in the valley empty into Texcoco, which, having no outlet, rose on this occasion higher and higher till it overflowed all the lower stories of the city's houses. The king, happening to be in a basement when the water began to pour in, ran out hastily, striking his forehead against the low doorway, a blow from which he never recovered. At his death, three years later, another Moctezuma was made king—Moctezuma Xocoyótzin (the younger).

This Moctezuma was a great-grandson of the one who had been a famous chief previously. Elevated to the position of supreme power at the age of thirty-four, after he had become famous as a soldier, and while exercising the prerogatives of high priest in the temple of the God of War, he became a tyrannical and autocratic ruler, with exalted conceptions of his own dignity and importance. With his army he at once went upon a campaign of conquest to obtain prisoners for the human sacrifices that were to mark his accession to the throne. Having subdued, one by one, the tribes in the adjacent valley, he and his generals later sought occasion to declare war against the vigorous republic of Tlaxcala. The peo-

ple of Tlaxcala were one of the kindred tribes from the North, who, having settled a little farther east in a beautiful valley among the mountains, had developed a vigorous government republican in form. The Mexicans invaded this republic on some pretext, but really because the ambitions of their king demanded its subjugation. But the Tlaxcalans were people of the same hardy stock, and by surprising the invading army in the mountain passes they inflicted upon it a disastrous defeat. The attack was followed by a second, even more formidable, which was also repulsed with great loss to the invaders.

Domestic affairs then for a time claimed the attention of the Mexican king. He extended the buildings of his capital city, brought fresh water in from a spring at the foot of the hill of Chapultepec on the neighboring mainland, and took such measures as were possible to relieve his people after the ravages of a fierce drought. From time to time he renewed the war with Tlaxcala and also sent out more than one expedition against the Indians of Michoacán. Of both these independent enemies of the Mexican emperor, as some historians have chosen to call him, there will be occasion to make mention later. The people of Tlaxcala became friends and allies of the Spaniards when they arrived and in all likelihood saved the little army of Cortés from annihilation.

Far to the west, among the green mountains of Michoacán, was the independent monarchy, if so dignified and serious a term is admissible, of the Tarascans. Their king had his capital on the margin of

Lake Pátzcuaro, one of the most beautiful fresh water lakes on the American continent. Embowered in pine-clad mountains, it is still surrounded by a necklace of towns inhabited mostly by full-blood Tarascan Indians. The town, which was at that time the capital of an extensive government—though one that was not at all compact in its organization—is now a dilapidated village; still called, however, by its ancient name of Tzintzúntzan, or “place of humming birds.” A great painting by the Spanish master, Titian, said to have been the gift of one of the kings of Spain to the Indian king of Michoacán, still hangs in the parish church. The efforts of Moctezuma to reduce this tribe of Indians to subjection to his Mexican empire were as fruitless as were his attacks upon Tlaxcala. The Tarascans were not a warlike people, but were too numerous and too secure in their mountain fastnesses to be subdued by any military expedition which Moctezuma was able to send against them. Such was the situation in Mexico at the time of the Spanish invasion.

Much has been written, first and last, concerning the civilization, languages, customs, and state of advancement of the Mexican Indians at the time of the conquest. Certain it is that they had developed an admirable calendar, had mastered some of the fundamental principles of architecture in stone, and had devised civil institutions concerning the elaborateness of which there are many and various opinions. The early records left us by the soldiers and ecclesiastics of the invading Spanish forces are so frequently contradictory, and in many respects so manifestly

exaggerated, that they do not command absolute credence. In contrast with their exaltation of the civilization and power of the native races was the unreasonable urgency on the part especially of the priests to destroy and obliterate all records and evidences of the religion and civilization which had preceded their advent. The social and political institutions of the people were, according to a well-known law, largely the outcome of their religious faith; and the best possible gauge of their quality would be a study of the religions upon which they were founded. But the Spanish priests were unhesitating in their belief that all the religious rites, ceremonies, temples, and records were a work of the devil. They therefore destroyed them, right and left. As usually happens, the priests of the aboriginal religions were also the learned men of the different tribes, and such records in picture writing, and the like, as existed were usually written and kept by them. This treasure of accumulated manuscripts (in parenthesis it may be remarked that the Indians understood the manufacture of an excellent grade of paper made of maguey fiber) was almost completely lost to the world through the zeal of men who could not understand that, in order to convince people of other faiths of the truths of Christianity, it is well as far as may be to accept their own religious ideas as legitimate in their sphere and as having in themselves also a basis of truth.

In spite of the fact that at the time when America was discovered by Europeans the Aztecs and their neighbors had developed into a warlike and power-



ful nation, it is true still that the Indian tribes of Mexico were essentially agricultural in their habits. They were not mere wandering warriors living by rapine and the chase, as were so many tribes inhabiting the territory which is now the United States. Before the coming of the Spaniards they cultivated corn, beans, chocolate, pepper, tomatoes, cotton, onions, garlic, pumpkins, various succulent roots, and a number of different nuts and fruits. The Spaniards added to the aggregate of agricultural products, bringing in wheat, barley, and oats, with numerous new kinds of fruits, and introducing domestic animals and better tools. It is interesting to note that the plow which they brought is the Moorish plow and dates back in northern Africa and Asia to prehistoric times. It may be seen in Mexico, unchanged to this day, an evidence of the conservatism of the people and of the unfortunate fact that they remain yet almost in the same state in which they found themselves immediately after the Spanish conquest. With that conquest we must now deal.

## CHAPTER II

### SPAIN IN MEXICO

No more hardy band of adventurers ever landed upon an alien shore than the company which, under the lead of Hernando Cortés, drew to land on the 21st of April, 1519, inside the rocky island of San Juan de Ulloa and on the sandy beach where now stands the city of Vera Cruz. This point had been visited a little more than a year before by Hernández de Córdova, who, with Juan de Grijalva, had explored the coast of Yucatán and the adjacent islands, turning back at last from the shore of the mainland with stories of an immense empire, rich in gold and precious stones, which lay far in the interior.

Cuba and other West Indian islands had been settled by the Spaniards in the years following the voyages and discoveries of Christopher Columbus. In 1511, Diego Velásquez, who, from having been a servant in the house of Diego Columbus, brother of Don Christopher, became later the colonial governor of the island of Española (Santo Domingo), was transferred to the larger island of Cuba, recently vanquished by the Spanish arms, taking with him, among others, his private secretary, Don Hernando Cortés. This young man was a native of the Spanish city of Medellín, where he was born in the year 1485. Running away from school at the age of sixteen years, he had, after various difficulties, secured passage to the New World, where, on the island of Española,

he was living as a farmer and land-owner at the time when his friend, Don Diego, was made governor of the island of Cuba. In the skirmishes which preceded the settlement of this new government he distinguished himself as an intrepid soldier, and when the lands and slaves captured in the conquest were divided among the followers of the governor general he received a large assignment of both in the province of Santiago.

The voyages of discovery among the islands and along the peninsula of Yucatán mentioned above were undertaken under the direction and at the expense of the new governor general of Cuba. Having become convinced by the reports brought back by his two captains that there were great opportunities for procuring booty on the mainland of Mexico, he organized a new and larger expedition under the special pretext of sending it in search of Grijalva, who, having gone out with one or two ships on an exploring trip, had not been heard from. Velásquez was much concerned to find a proper captain general for this new and somewhat formidable expedition. It was of the utmost importance to him that both the glory and the booty of the voyage should be his. Yet it was easy to see that the man having charge of it might put himself into communication directly with the royal government of Spain and thus rob the real promoter of the expedition of all credit that might accrue. For it was well known that the Spanish government was as greedy for added territory and added spoils as any of the ardent adventurers who crossed the waters in this crusade.

After much hesitation, the governor finally decided to offer the command of the expedition to his friend and former secretary, Don Hernando. They had not always been on good terms, and one disagreement had well-nigh proved serious for the adventurous secretary. But his ability was well known to his superior, who, after all, was chiefly interested in the success of the expedition.

So, toward the end of the year 1518, the ships of the new flotilla were gathered at Santiago de Cuba, from which point they sailed away, stopping for a week at Macaca and a little later at Habana. The fleet consisted of eleven ships carrying five hundred and eight soldiers, thirteen of them armed with muskets and thirty-two with crossbows, sixteen horses, ten pieces of brass artillery, and four falconets. The soldiers had been recruited under the royal banner of Spain, beside which Cortés had the presumption to raise another in imitation of that of Constantine, bearing a cross with this inscription in Latin: "Friends, with true faith let us follow the cross, for thereby we shall conquer."

On the peninsula of Yucatán they picked up a captive Spanish priest and a few natives. Among these was an Aztec slave girl named Marina, who still remembered well her native language. She also knew Maya, the language of her captors, in which she was able to converse with Father Aguilar, the priest, who had learned it during his captivity. She was of attractive person and sprightly intellect and became a devoted attendant of the captain general. When negotiations with the Aztecs were later entered upon,



she translated their messages into Maya for Father Aguilar, who then gave them to his captain in Spanish. Long before the conquest was consummated, however, she had herself acquired the Spanish language.

Landing on the shore of Mexico where it is protected by the rocky island of San Juan, Cortés shrewdly took advantage of the Spanish law giving a certain power of autonomy to municipalities and founded the *Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*—that is, the Rich City of the True Cross. The proper officers were elected according to the royal law, and, as symbolic of the power of the new government, a gallows was set up, and hard by a picket for exposing the heads of those who should be executed. There is a grim significance about these finishing touches in the organizing of the first *ayuntamiento* on Mexican soil which will not escape the reader. So soon as the city government was duly established the captain general resigned to it the commission he had received from the governor of Cuba. He was promptly elected commander in chief and at the same time appointed civil governor. Thus at one stroke he cut himself loose from every obligation to Velásquez and put himself at the head of all the powers, both civil and military, of this newest of Spanish colonies.

Cortés soon decided upon the bold and daring step of destroying his ships. Having selected two or three of his most faithful and loyal friends, he sent them with one ship and its crew to report directly to the King of Spain, giving him an account of the expedition and protesting the loyalty of his new col-

onists. Then, in the month of July (1519), having removed from the ships all the sails and cordage and all metals that might be of service in building others, he sent them to the bottom. Such were these hardy sons of a race which in that day had no superior in physical and intellectual vigor and in all the traits which go to make up the successful soldier and explorer. The courage, the calmness, the resourcefulness, the endurance, both physical and moral, displayed by Cortés and his men, during the two years following this reckless act, form a contrast to the qualities found in the soldiers of Spain to-day which is worthy of careful study.

Meantime, the Mexican king and his court were shaken with the most profound anxiety. Moctezuma, though he had been a bold and successful warrior in his youth, had been much affected in more recent years by the superstitions and prognostications of the priests. He was himself high priest at the time of his election to the position of ruler. A tradition was current that Quetzalcóatl would reappear. The description of this fabled god as fair-skinned and bearded tallied so with the appearance of the Europeans that the superstitious king could not shake himself clear of the feeling that the Spaniards were divine. Their muskets, their cannon, and the terrible horses on which they mounted and rode to victory augmented this supernatural impression. Some of the priests who had but recently essayed the rôle of prophet had interpreted certain mystic signs and incidents to signify that the king, Moctezuma, was soon to be destroyed. In view of all these things, he

had fallen into a profound melancholy, and instead of boldly preparing to resist the encroachments of these invaders, he began to send them embassy after embassy with the anxious request that they leave him in peace. To secure their compliance, these messengers went loaded with gold and precious stones. These presents, far from encouraging Cortés and his followers to leave Mexico, served rather the purpose of loadstones to attract them more and more. Scarcely anything in history is more humiliating than the consuming avarice which, like a burning thirst, drew the Spanish invaders on wherever they touched the New World.

On the 16th of August, 1519, followed by his own troops, except a small garrison which he left in Vera Cruz, by several thousand of the inhabitants of Campoalla, a neighboring town, and some hundreds of Indian burden-bearers dragging his artillery, the Spanish captain set out in the direction of the interior highlands. His army consisted of four hundred foot soldiers, fifteen cavalrymen, and six pieces of artillery.

On the way to Mexico, and after the Spaniards had with little resistance reached the high plateau, they found the republic of Tlaxcala. Its people were not friendly to the Aztecs, and after they had suffered a series of bloody defeats, due to the superiority of the Spanish arms, they at last made an alliance with Cortés to help him against Moctezuma. Thus reinforced, the Spanish rapidly advanced upon the valley of Mexico. The first town of importance belonging to Moctezuma's domain was Cholula, which

they captured and pillaged with inexcusable brutality, the Tlaxcalans wreaking their hatred upon hereditary enemies.

Pressing forward as autumn drew on, despite constant protests from the Aztec king, early in November Cortés reached without further serious fighting the island city of Tenochtitlán, before whose gates the now intimidated monarch met him. Having presented himself in state before Cortés, who received him with the brusque frankness of the soldier, he told the Spaniards that since they had come from the East and were evidently sons of the sun, Mexico looked upon them as the rightful rulers of those lands. (The worship of the sun had long been a primary element of the native religion.) A day later, November 10, 1519, Cortes returned the official visit and entered the sacred city. Under the guise of reasonable curiosity he carefully examined its approaches, streets, buildings, and natural defenses. Several of his followers, as well as the captain himself, have left accounts of Tenochtitlán as the Spaniards found it. Bernal Díaz, Alonzo de Ojeda, Andrés de Papia, Alonzo de Mata, and an anonymous *conquistador*, all wrote descriptions of the city which agree in their essential particulars. It was substantially built, of mud bricks for the most part, but with some structures in stone, along streets which on the east and south terminated in the lake, while to the west and north several of them were continued in causeways, extending to the mainland, but bridging frequent canals through which canoes might pass.

Having been assigned a spacious palace as a place

of residence, the Spaniards made themselves at home in Mexico, setting up an altar for their worship and fortifying their house. As if further to excite their cupidity, an evil fortune led them to discover a secret door in the palace which had been turned over to them, which, on being broken open, revealed a treasure-room containing a large quantity of gold. About this time word reached Cortés of a disastrous battle in which his Vera Cruz garrison had engaged through coming to the support of their neighbors, the Campoallans, against an Aztec army. A number of the Spaniards, including their commander, Juan Escalante, were killed and one taken prisoner. The Aztecs sent the head of this prisoner all the way to Mexico, that their king might be convinced at last that these invaders were not immortal beings. Advised of this, Cortés called a council and appeared with several of his leaders before Moctezuma, charging him with treachery. The king made the very just reply that the conduct of his soldiers in their campaign against a rebellious province was not under his immediate supervision, but that he would surrender the commander of these troops, with his principal officers, to the Spaniards so soon as they returned. When, true to his promise, he had done this, Cortés, after investigating the incidents of the death of his fellow countrymen, though, with the exception of one prisoner, they had been slain in warfare, nevertheless condemned the general with his son and fifteen of his principal associates to be burned alive. This cruel and inexcusable sentence was carried out in the presence of Moctezuma and his people, and



the king himself was henceforth kept a prisoner in the palace of Cortés, loaded with chains. He continued to beg Cortés to withdraw, insisting that his people were reaching a state of mind such that he could not be responsible for the consequences.

About this time Cortés and Moctezuma each heard with no small satisfaction that ships had arrived off Vera Cruz. The Indian king took it for granted that as the Spaniards now had ships they would at once sail away to their own country. Cortés was pleased, because he expected to find in these new arrivals the recruits which his messengers to Spain had sent out. Both were destined soon to be undeceived. The new arrivals proved to be a fleet of fifteen vessels, bringing some eight hundred soldiers, which had been sent by the governor general of Cuba. The messengers of Cortés to Spain had, contrary to his orders, touched at Cuba on their way, and Velásquez, perceiving at once, from the accounts they brought, the purpose of Cortés, had organized and sent this expedition to arrest him, that he might secure for himself the fruits of the voyage of conquest.

Leaving Pedro Alvarado with a small garrison in Mexico, Cortés set out at once with such of his own troops as he could gather—for many of them had been dispatched to interior towns—and marched rapidly to the coast. His hardened veterans made a fierce onslaught by night on the sleeping city of Vera Cruz, now in possession of the new arrivals, captured the commander, and secured the surrender of his troops. There were few lost on either side, the whole

result of the movement being the addition of this new force to the army of Cortés. Scarcely any other episode in the history of this daring adventurer displays him to greater advantage.

In possession now of a respectable army, he at once began to send detachments hither and thither throughout the country in order to establish formally his position as its ruler. Scarcely had he begun to plan these new measures, however, when word came to him that his little garrison in Tenochtitlán was hard pressed and in need of immediate succor. This had come about mostly through the stupid cruelty of Alvarado, who had without provocation murdered a multitude of prominent people there.

Cortés, hurrying back, arrived in Mexico June 24, 1520, greatly to the relief of his beleaguered lieutenant. He visited upon Alvarado, however, no severer punishment than a reproof for his conduct. But, thoroughly ashamed of it, he declined to see Moctezuma and, in order to propitiate somewhat the people, liberated a brother of the king that he might help to quiet the disturbed city. This brother, however, who was of a vigorous and warlike spirit, instead of quieting the insurrection, did all in his power to promote it. Within twenty-four hours after being liberated he advanced to attack the Spaniards with a huge army. Then began a bloody struggle in the streets of the Mexican capital which resulted at the last in the complete defeat and ignominious retirement of the invaders.

For five days the attack went on. Finding himself hard pressed, Cortés undertook to take advantage of

the influence of Moctezuma as in a critical moment Alvarado had done. The king again ascended to the roof of the palace where the Spaniards were fortified and exhorted his people to desist. The sight of him on this occasion, however, instead of quieting only irritated them the more, his own nephew calling out in a loud voice that he was no longer their king. This youth then bending his bow sent an arrow flying at the unhappy captive, and the shower of stones and arrows which followed drove Moctezuma mortally wounded from his place. The Indians renewed their attack with redoubled bitterness.

The position of the Spaniards finally becoming intolerable, Cortés decided to force his way out. Providing his troops with a movable bridge for spanning the gaps in the causeway, he led his little band forth westward at midnight. Before they were fairly started, however, the huge tom-tom on the high Teocalli alarmed the city, and the attacking host swarmed upon them like angry bees. That was the famous *Noche Triste*, or mournful night. Cortés at dawn sat down, weary and wounded, under a cypress which is still shown, and shed tears over the gallant men left behind, some dead, others prisoners—a fate worse than death, for these were destined to be sacrificed before the dreadful God of War.

Harassed by the Mexicans, whom they constantly repulsed with huge slaughter, the Spaniards slowly retiring reached the city of their allies, the Tlaxcalans. Here they rested during the winter, recruited somewhat in numbers by the crews of chance ves-

sels arriving at Vera Cruz, which crews Cortés always managed to attach to himself.

The next summer, 1521, he again attacked the capital. This time the city was approached by water as well as by land, the Spaniards having built and launched a number of brigantines. The warlike brother of Moctezuma, who had succeeded him, had died of smallpox, a new scourge brought by the Spaniards, which decimated the whole Aztec empire. He had been succeeded by Cuautémoc—"last of the Aztecs"—a valiant and high-spirited youth, one of the most romantic figures in history. The melancholy story of how he lost his kingdom and his life may be read in the pages of Prescott. It need not be detailed here. A noble bronze statue of him, surrounded by figures which are a grim commemoration of some of the cruelest deeds of the Spaniards in that time of blood, stands on the famous Paseo de la Reforma, placed there by the government under Porfirio Díaz. In August, 1521, the city of Tenochtitlán passed into the hands of the Spaniards. Since that date it has been known as Mexico.

For exactly three hundred years, from 1521 to 1821, Mexico was reckoned a province of Spain and called *Nueva España*, New Spain. From the year 1535 onward the administration was vice-regal. The viceroys, though their terms were limited at various times by royal decrees to six and even to three years, virtually had unlimited tenure of office, since these decrees were systematically disregarded. Autocratic in power, they were nevertheless subject to the

whim of the King of Spain, who could depose or recall them at will, and to the supervision of a self-perpetuating royal council associated with him called *El Consejo de las Indias*. They were trammelled also by an *Audiencia* at the seat of their government, a sort of court of review, ostensibly appointed to audit their accounts and see that the royal treasury received its due share from the income of the province, but becoming with time a check upon their actions and a medium of communication between the people and the court of Spain. At one time, for example, a viceroy had occasion to borrow three millions of dollars. The money was cheerfully lent by the merchants of the City of Mexico, since, as one of their own historians remarks, the system of checking the accounts of these representatives of the Spanish throne was so strict that the lenders ran no risk of losing their money.

It is unhappily to be recorded, however, that, so unbounded were the prerogatives of the viceroys, and so vague is the border line between government and oppression, for abuses inflicted by these officers upon the people at large there was virtually no redress. The native population was indeed looked down upon by the Spanish crown itself to such a degree that treatment of them which would have been thought intolerable if inflicted upon Europeans seemed to their Spanish majesties to call for no special censure.

These natives of Mexico labored from the beginning under at least three great disadvantages. First, they were "infidels." A great deal of the cruel hostility with which the Mohammedan Moors had in-



vested that term lingered in the so-called Christian theology of Spain. It originated the Spanish Inquisition in the very years in which the government of that country's colonies was taking shape. It justified barbarities in the administration of that government, and even in the propagation of the Christian faith, that the clearer vision of a later day sees to be quite out of harmony with the Christian spirit. Secondly, the Indians of Mexico were to the governing Spaniards of alien race. Race hatred was not so acute in the commingling which took place in that country as it has been in many others; yet it was never wholly absent. In the third place, the Indians were helpless. Only one or two tribes of them had developed a warlike temper, and these had been subdued by the overwhelming superiority of European arms. The remainder were, almost without exception, pacific and timid. They yielded to their oppressors without resistance, almost without protest. Not to abuse a situation like that, where the ownership of fertile lands and of princely deposits of minerals is involved, is not in human nature.

The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, especially of the great religious orders within that Church, made haste to enter upon the undertaking of converting these gentle pagans to the true faith. In this the soldiers, having altogether mechanical notions of the nature of true religion, cheerfully assisted. They even made it a pretext for new campaigns of conquest and had the assurance to adorn the banners which waved over some of their bloodiest and most inexcusable ventures with the cross of the

gentle Christ. The story of their manner of promoting the cause of Christianity is enough to bring a blush to the cheek of any Christian who reads it.

The missionaries, it is true, were often, especially in the beginning, self-denying and devout men. They were a little narrow, to be sure, and broke up idols and destroyed records that would be of inestimable value now had they been preserved. Some of them, notably Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, became ardent and fearless champions of the Indians and their rights as against their oppressors. A Mexican painter, in a powerful canvas which now hangs in the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City, has paid tribute to Las Casas as the "Protector of the Indians."

Unfortunately the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and its practice of the monastic system, are not calculated to perpetuate gentleness and justice in the administration of missionary affairs. The teaching of implicit obedience, for example, paid under vows by the monks to their superiors and under the whip of the confessional by the converts to the priests, is one which tends powerfully to the corruption of human nature. In addition to this, the rivalries of the different orders in Mexico made each greedy of property and of power; and the result was soon seen in such a concentration of the wealth of this new and fecund country within the establishments of the monastic orders as permanently to disturb its peace and well-being. As early as 1644 the city council of Mexico City forwarded to Philip IV of Spain a formal petition to allow the establishment of no more convents and monasteries in

New Spain. The document declares that there were already so many monks and nuns there that they were quite out of proportion to the total population; besides which, there seemed to be great danger that they would get possession of all the property in the country, of which *they already owned half*. It goes on to request a special order to the bishops that they should ordain no more priests, since there were already more than six thousand who were absolutely without occupation; and that steps should be taken to diminish the number of holidays, of which there were two or three each week, a state of affairs tending greatly to the increase of laziness! This naïve petition unhappily received no notice on the part of the court of Spain, a neglect which was afterwards bitterly atoned for by all concerned. The activity of these religious orders resulted finally in a total of one hundred and seventy-nine monasteries and eighty-five nunneries. The Franciscans led, with fifty-two out of the one hundred and seventy-nine; the Dominicans had thirty, and the Augustinians twenty-six.

The viceregal period in Mexico, though so long, was singularly uneventful. The administration of Mexican affairs during that period derived its character from the two influences most potent in Spain, the Spanish monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church. Both these were cast in molds so fixed that for three hundred years their variation was insignificant. The viceroys came and went. They rarely held the position more than four or five years, though, as has been remarked, no attention was paid

by the Spanish crown to the limits once or twice set. A humane and popular man, with a diplomatic talent equal to the task of keeping down complaints against himself, might remain a dozen years. Usually, however, they returned voluntarily, or were recalled, after terms averaging about four years.

It seemed to be considered one of the perquisites of the position that the viceroy should enrich himself. He was absolute master of the financial administration of a rich and productive province. His establishment was an expensive affair, to be sure, but his salary was forty thousand dollars a year. By farming out the taxation, selling special grants and privileges, and, in spite of constant surveillance, occasionally tampering with the bookkeeping, most of them managed to make the office a productive one and to retire from it rich.

The viceroys were in more or less constant controversy with the aristocratic land and mine owners and with the haughty chiefs of the Catholic hierarchy in Mexico. Early in the history of that country a most pernicious system of peonage originated. When the land was divided off into grants by royal decree—regardless, of course, of the rights of the Indian owners—with each grant native laborers to a certain number were assigned to the favored citizen—"commended" (*encomendados*) to him that he might educate and Christianize them. Indeed these *encomiendas* of native laborers did not at first carry with them the grant of title to the land. As might have been guessed, given the hard-hearted avarice of the average colonist of that time and his crude no-

tions of the nature of conversion to Christianity, this system almost at once degenerated into slavery, pure and simple. In the same way the laborers in the mines virtually belonged to their employers, who controlled their food supply, administered their courts of law—such as they had—and represented to them that ominous and invisible power across the sea which they hated, but feared to resist. The Catholic Church, in this matter, as in many others, set a melancholy example which those who accepted it as monitor were glad enough to follow. Vast architectural piles, churches, colleges, convents, monasteries, crowded each other in every city—almost in every village—built by the unrequited and forced labor of timorous converts. Huge supplies of candles and other accessories of the religious ceremonials were constantly contributed by indigent worshipers, only to be resold in the market and thus made to enrich the priests and friars.

The enslavement of the Indian mine laborers and the melancholy situation of the *encomendados* were the occasion of numerous and pointed protests to the Spanish crown on the part of generous-hearted ecclesiastics and even of viceroys. The whole system of *encomiendas*, so often denounced, was finally abolished by royal authority, an act which, though it prevented the further extension of it, operated very slowly indeed to interfere with the feudal pride of men who controlled previous grants of docile slaves. Nevertheless, in places, mining regions especially, where the abuse had become particularly heinous, or where there was a dogged and perhaps eloquent



prior or bishop who took the Indians' part, there were from time to time outbreaks of justice highly creditable to the Spanish crown and to the viceroy of the period. A few of these viceroys were so considerate of the native population, and so resolute in promoting their interests, that their names are embalmed in history with epithets fragrant yet of a people's gratitude. At the very beginning were two of this type, Don Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy, and Don Luís de Velasco, the second. Mendoza was so careful of the interests of the Indians, especially in connection with a plague which broke out during his period, that they called him "Father of the Poor." Velasco, who died in 1564, was universally mourned as the "Father of the Country." It was during his term that the Emperor Charles V issued express orders that there should be no more *encomiendas* and that those already granted should expire with the death of the men to whom they had been made—that is, should not be inherited. This order, as we have seen, was not immediately carried out. On a certain occasion, however, Velasco took advantage of the royal attitude toward this subject to liberate one hundred and sixty thousand slaves, mostly miners, with the noble remark that "the freedom of the native Indians was worth more than all the mines in the world, and that the royal share in the income of these mines [one-fifth] was not so important as to justify the breaking of all law, both human and divine."

## CHAPTER III

### THE COLONY BECOMES INDEPENDENT

THREE hundred years after the Spanish government had asserted its sway in Mexico, its authority was shaken off by that country. The immediate cause of this successful revolution was the Napoleonic intervention in Spain. How that disturbance served to promote and bring to a crisis the feebly stirring sentiment in favor of liberty and independence in nearly all of the Spanish American countries is a story that has perhaps never been adequately told. It will be sufficient here to give an outline of it in so far as it concerns Mexico. The essential phases of the situation are really few, though both in Spain and in her American colonies the political and social movements of the first two decades of the nineteenth century seem infinitely complex.

The success of the political revolution in Mexico may be explained by a single statement: It became possible when the Catholic Church was alienated from the Spanish government. All other influences making toward independence would have come to nought without this final and decisive element. The uprising under the lead of Hidalgo in 1810 failed utterly, though, as later transpired, events in Spain so affected the situation of Mexico that this abortive movement there became in fact the beginning of ul-

timate independence. But so great was the wealth and influence of the Catholic Church, so thoroughly had the people of Mexico and other Latin American countries been trained in the habit of loyal submission to that Church, that so long as the Church and the government of the mother country acted in concert there was not the slightest likelihood that any movement toward independence from Spain would succeed. It is true that the success of the English colonies in North America, which had set themselves up into the independent United States, and the far-reaching influence of the sentiments which had culminated in the French Revolution, had agitated even the submissive populations of Spanish America. These dim strivings of patriotism would doubtless have been even more pronounced than they were had the indigenous races been allowed to attain to that advanced and enlightened intellectual condition to which their number and their native intelligence entitled them. For it was among them especially that the love of country was essentially linked with the love of liberty, and to them that freedom and patriotism seemed one and the same thing.

But so systematically and so successfully had the ecclesiastical power combined forces with the political and the social that the Indians, after three hundred years of so-called Christian training, were as ignorant and as helpless as before the Spanish came. The very language, which had little by little forced out their native dialects, was full of terms that pointed out and enforced their inferiority. People of Spanish stock were called *gente de razón*, "rational

people," whereas it was commonly accepted as a matter of course that the reason of a *peón* or *indito* was not sufficient to justify any effort to educate him. Judge Ignacio Altamirano, one of the greatest literary critics ever produced by Mexico, used to relate with great glee that he became *gente de razón*, though of pure Indian blood, because his father happened to be appointed alcalde of the village. When that event took place, the village schoolmaster decided that he must teach young Ignacio his letters.

Events that later led to the complete independence of Mexico—and the story is essentially the same for all the Spanish American colonies—were taking place both in that country and in Spain, during the years 1808 to 1821. Bearing in mind the decisive influence of the Catholic Church party, which party, so soon as it was alienated from Spain, insured the success of the revolutionary movement, we may undertake in a summary way to run over these movements.

In 1808 Napoleon, following up his dream of world-wide dominion, wrested the throne of Spain from the weakling king, Charles IV, and his even weaker son, Ferdinand VII. In the effort to reconcile the Spanish people to this high-handed measure and to the government he proposed to set up—putting his brother Joseph on the stolen throne—he called for a gathering, "junta," of Spanish notables. The Spanish patriots had been growing increasingly restive under the miserable subterfuge of a government into which their kingdom had degenerated, and this junta, called by Napoleon, became

the signal and type for others. Thus came about the remarkable movement known to history as "the Spanish juntas." The men composing these groups presently asserted their right to govern Spain. The juntas entered into treaties with England. They declared war against Napoleon. They assumed control of the colonies, Mexico among the rest. They demanded liberal concessions from Ferdinand as a condition of his restoration to the Spanish throne. They quoted from the utterances of the French revolutionists high-sounding principles concerning the rights of man. Most of their members were openly hostile to the Catholic Church.

As the nature and purposes of these juntas gradually percolated into the thought of the colonists, great anxiety was awakened, and with it, among the conservatives at least, great resentment. The Viceroy of Mexico, Iturrigaray, announced the change in the home administration, July, 1808, and required the Mexican people to submit to the demands of the "junta central" at Sevilla, at the same time proclaiming his loyalty to the dethroned house of Bourbon, and especially to Ferdinand VII. He seems to have been under the impression that the junta was working entirely in the interests of Ferdinand as against the French.

It soon appeared, however, that the juntas had many things in view besides the replacing on their throne of the deported Bourbons; and when their intentions concerning reforms, popular government, and the like became known, the viceroy found himself between two fires. For the Ayuntamiento of



Mexico, which had never recognized any power but that of the King of Spain, with whom it was accustomed to deal directly, flatly refused to have anything to do with the juntas. In this the people, loyal to the crown, supported the Ayuntamiento. Some suggested that it would be a good arrangement to have Ferdinand come to Mexico, but the confusion and uncertainty were so great that a plan for this did not then take shape. Meantime the viceroy, trying to carry water on both shoulders, excited the suspicion of the Audiencia, made up as it was of ardent royalists, and was by them imprisoned and sent in chains to Spain. For a time his place was taken by temporary substitutes, but in 1810 Vanegas, duly authorized by the Junta Central, made his appearance in Mexico and took command of the situation. His disagreement with the Ayuntamiento, and with the large loyal element in the population, of which the leaders of the Church were the guiding spirits, would have reached an acute stage very promptly had not events of a most stirring nature in the politics of Mexico drawn away the attention of all concerned from the situation in Spain. For a time the question was not whether Mexico should be on the side of Ferdinand or of the junta, but rather whether or not she should break all connection with Spain.

From the beginning the Spanish administration of Mexican affairs had, at least from the Mexican point of view, exhibited grave defects. Every abuse of sovereign power of which the colonists in Virginia and Massachusetts complained was duplicated south of the Rio Grande. To them were added many oth-

ers. The native population had, as we have seen, suffered much from various forms of slavery. One peculiarly exasperating development of this kind has not been mentioned. Various individual Spaniards, or associations of "Conquistadores," as they rather insultingly called themselves, obtained from the Spanish crown monopolies of sundry articles of primary necessity. By placing an exorbitant price upon these products they soon managed to have a large number of natives constantly in their debt. The old savage laws concerning debtors, in vogue then throughout the world, were even more savage in Mexico. The creditor virtually owned the debtor. For a poor man, a laboring man, getting into debt was equivalent to selling himself into slavery. And industrial slavery of this kind is really worse than domestic slavery, for if the slave is a chattel his owner will take care of him so that his value may not diminish. But nobody cares whether a peon lives or dies. He cannot be sold, and his place, if he dies, can easily be filled.

The government also had certain monopolies—salt, tobacco, and gunpowder among them—besides one-fifth of the income of all the gold and silver mines, the sale of civil and ecclesiastical offices, a stamp tax, and a poll tax exacted only of the Indians. The king also demanded a share of the immense income arising from religious rites, for which the people paid the priests vast sums in the form of fees. In addition to all these abuses, the viceroys and their subordinates deliberately planned to return to Spain rich after even a brief administration, a thing which

nobody seemed to think amiss. Indeed, the vice-royalty was much sought as a means of recouping the fortunes of decayed aristocracy. What financial burdens all this imposed upon the productive population of Mexico may be imagined. The people were also forbidden to compete with Spain by raising grapes or olives, or by erecting factories for the production of any article important to the manufacturing interests of the mother country. Moreover, Mexico could neither buy nor sell in any market save that of Spain, from whose ports all her shipments had to come and to them all her exports be sent. The disastrous effects on commerce of such laws need not be described.

In the summer of 1810 a little company of patriots banded together in the city of Querétaro to discuss plans for freeing Mexico from Spain. The movement seems to have had no immediate connection with the disturbances then taking place in the Spanish government, but to have been a growth from slowly accumulating sentiments of patriotism and from the stirring of the principles of popular liberty then so generally sifting through the thought of the world. The group was made up of men in the various walks of life—two of them soldiers, a pair of lawyers, a physician, some merchants, etc. They were not generally Indians, or even *mestizos*. The creoles—that is, Mexican-born Spaniards—had been so much discriminated against by the government, and were so commonly looked down upon socially by the governing classes and the “old Spaniards,” that they had come to identify themselves almost en-

tirely with the other elements in the native population. They held themselves above the Indians, of course, but at the same time felt themselves to be Mexicans and not Spaniards, a feeling which is very pronounced among them at the present time.

The Querétaro group, knowing how important it was to conciliate the Church, and feeling the need of an intelligent leader, made advances to Father Hidalgo, curate of the little village of Dolores, some seventy miles to the north of their city. Hidalgo had been educated at the Colegio de San Nicolás, in Valladolid (now Morelia), the oldest college in America. He was a progressive and philanthropic man and had been much annoyed by the interference of the government with his efforts to teach his parishioners horticulture. He found the restriction as to grapes especially annoying, having already taught his people silkworm and bee culture, besides establishing a factory of earthenware and otherwise advancing their worldly interests while ministering to them in spiritual things.

Hidalgo, having convinced himself by a visit or two at Querétaro that the new movement gave promise of a favorable development, at length agreed to be the leader of it and with the others began systematically to plan for an uprising. In the city of San Juan de los Lagos, situated in the same rich and populous state with Dolores, the state of Guanajuato, there is a yearly fiesta in the month of December. Thinking to take advantage of the throngs which would be in attendance upon it and could, it was believed, easily be drawn into a movement for in-

dependence, it was arranged to spring the movement at that place and time. But in September one or two members of the band of conspirators, through motives which history does not disclose, gave information to the government of what was going on, together with the names of all concerned. The local representative of the Spanish government in Querétaro, holding the office of *corregidor*, was Don Miguel Domínguez. Without actually having given his name as an adherent, he was aware of the existence of the conspiracy and friendly to it. His wife, an even more ardent patriot, also had knowledge of the whole movement. But when the conspiracy was formally and openly denounced to him, Don Miguel was forced reluctantly to take steps to arrest his friends. Locking his wife in their home for fear her zeal might outrun her prudence, he set out on September 14, 1810, to nip the revolution in the bud. Mrs. Domínguez, however, was a woman for whom a mere lock and key signified little. She managed to call to her window a reliable policeman, himself inclined to the revolutionary cause, and sent him flying to Dolores to warn Hidalgo.

The priest himself, however, had been betrayed by a hired agent, a soldier of the regiment then stationed at San Miguel, a neighboring town, who had given information to the commander there. Hearing rumors of this, Hidalgo had sent for Captain Allende, the chief mover of the conspiracy, who lived in San Miguel (since named for him), and the two were at Dolores in consultation when the news from Querétaro arrived. Aldama, the messenger, reached that



village a little after midnight of September 15, 1810, and found Allende. Together they went to Hidalgo's room in the early hours of the morning of the 16th and woke him. Having heard the definite news, he arose to dress himself, saying coolly: "Gentlemen, we are in for it. There is nothing for us to do but to set out on our hunt for *gachupines*"—a slang term for Spaniards.

The priest's loyal friends and supporters in the village were hastily sent for, and in the cool September dawn a group of men, humble laborers and farmers, whose names Mexican history proudly preserves, soon gathered about the *curato*. The village prison was forced and the political prisoners set free. It was Sunday morning, and when the parish bell<sup>1</sup> called to mass it rang out a call to liberty which echoes yet. For when the people came they learned what was going on, and the patriot priest lifted up his ever-memorable "*grito*" of "*!Viva la Independencia!*" Thus dramatically was launched the movement which, though it seemed soon to be blotted out in blood, never stopped till Mexico was free.

Of that first outbreak, so unformed, so premature, without military organization or equipment, without program, and with a more or less visionary ecclesiastic as leader, the wonder is not that it failed, but that it came so near to success. The explanation, aside, of course, from the tremendous momentum of sentiment in favor of independence, is to be found in Hidalgo's shrewd instinct by which from

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<sup>1</sup>It now hangs over the door of the National Palace in Mexico City, and is rung once a year at midnight of September 15.

the very beginning he made it the cause of the Indians against the foreign invader. On that first Sunday, marching with his straggling mob in the direction of San Miguel, where with Allende's help he hoped to get hold of a few soldiers, as they passed the little village of Atotonilco and swept up the villagers who had gathered to mass, the patriot spied in the church a banner bearing the image of the Indian Virgin of Guadalupe. Snatching it down from the wall, he waved it before the excited multitude as their ensign, and to the cry of "Long live the independence of Mexico!" he added another, to them even more intelligible and inspiring, "Long live our Holy Mother of Guadalupe!" Thus the enterprise of the Catholic Church, which nearly three centuries before had supplied Mexico with a Virgin indigenous to the soil, contributed in an unexpected way to the well-being of the country by making it possible to combine religious enthusiasm with patriotic fervor. To the battle cries suggested by Hidalgo the people soon added another and ominous one, "*¡Mueran los gachupines!*" Death to the Spaniards! In San Miguel a whole regiment of soldiers, the "Queen's Own," was added to the mob of peasants, besides a welcome increase of arms and supplies. The people were armed with scythes, machetes, pikes, slings, and even hoes. On the 18th of the same month of September they swept on southward to Celaya, which was occupied on the 21st without resistance and sacked by the mob. Here an effort at organization was made, Hidalgo being appointed captain general and Allende lieutenant general.

From Celaya the expedition turned back to the northwest to invest the capital city of Hidalgo's state, Guanajuato, only a short distance across the mountains from Dolores. It was, as it is still, a city of much wealth, having then a considerable garrison of Spanish soldiers and a sort of customhouse and treasury building of great strength (called the *alhóndiga*), but badly situated for defense. The commander of the troops, having heard of the revolution, had as early as the 17th begun elaborate preparations to defend the city, calling on the people to rally to the help of the government. This they did at first, but within the two weeks which elapsed before the arrival of the patriot army they had learned more of its objects and character, and their ardor as defenders cooled. But the Spanish commander haughtily refused when called upon to surrender, and on September 28 was attacked by the revolutionists with such fury that he and his people were forced almost immediately to take refuge in the *alhóndiga*. From the neighboring slopes—the city lies in a narrow mountain gulch—poured such a storm of stones hurled by slingers that defense of the walls soon became impossible, the gate of the fortress was fired, and the invaders swept everything before them. Riaño, the Spanish commander, fell early in the engagement. During the night the city was plundered, but the next day Hidalgo published general orders reëstablishing the Ayuntamiento, or city government, and repressing disorder under severe penalties. Availing himself of the resources of the city, he began to take serious measures for the

success of his movement. He ordered the establishment of a cannon foundry and commenced to gather arms and supplies. Two weeks later he set out for his native city, Valladolid (Morelia).

Meantime, as may well be supposed, the vice-regal government was in a ferment. Vanegas, the viceroy of the juntas, had just arrived. He was an energetic man and at once issued orders to General Calleja, in San Luís Potosí, to go after the rebels with all the troops at his command. The government's army in Mexico was at the time made up of about ten thousand regulars and some twenty thousand provincial militia. The viceroy set a price on the heads of Hidalgo and Allende, and the archbishop of Michoacán anathematized his renegade priest publicly and by name, the Inquisition following suit. Hidalgo replied in a spirited proclamation, declaring himself a loyal Catholic still and calling on the people to awaken to their rights as freemen.

To all appearances the people heeded him rather than the viceroy and archbishop. On his way to Morelia nobody resisted him, and the city itself fell into his hands without objection. His following now numbered probably one hundred thousand. He took possession of \$400,000 which he found in the royal treasury at Valladolid, persuaded the ecclesiastical authorities to remove the disabilities of himself and his soldiers, and published a proclamation abolishing slavery and the poll tax. These measures gave him immense popularity with the Indians, and his army swept on unopposed toward Mexico.

On the high ridge between that city and Toluca,

the rim of the valley of Mexico, he met the royalist troops sent out to oppose him. While trying to arrange with them for a parley the battle broke out, and the viceroy's troops were soon disastrously defeated. There was nothing to hinder the advance of the revolutionists upon the capital, but for some reason Hidalgo hesitated a day or two and then withdrew northward. His action has never been fully explained. It must have been due in some measure, at least, to the timorous shrinking from bloodshed of a man unused to war. This battle was his first, and, though won by his troops, seems to have filled him with dismay.

Near Celaya he encountered Calleja, hastening to the relief of Mexico, who promptly attacked and routed the insurgents. Hidalgo went to Morelia and Allende to Guanajuato. Calleja followed Allende and, defeating him again, captured that city. Hidalgo soon passed on to Guadalajara, where he was made welcome. The revolutionary movement had spread through the whole country. There he undertook the organization of a civil government, appointed ministers, and sent messengers to the United States. But the royalist troops, concentrated under Calleja, were again approaching. The following of Hidalgo and of Allende, who had again joined him, was not much more than a mob. They went out to meet their enemy and again met defeat. The leaders made their way out to Aguascalientes, thence northward to Zacatecas, and on to Saltillo, from which place they set out for Monclova. Hidalgo had been persuaded to give the supreme military



command to Allende—a thing he ought to have done at the beginning—and they were again finding sympathizers in all quarters. It was only a question of obtaining supplies and arms, and they could soon gather another army. But on the way to Monclova they were betrayed by a young lieutenant, disaffected because Allende had refused to advance him in rank, and taken as prisoners of the royalist troops to Chihuahua. There the local Spanish commander promptly condemned them by court martial, and they were executed, about midsummer of 1811. Their heads were carried to Guanajuato and exposed on the famous *alhóndiga*, where they remained for ten years. The first chapter of Mexico's revolution thus came to an end.

How much more wisely Hidalgo was building than he knew appeared after his capture. In the four months that intervened between that capture and his execution another revolutionary army had been formed and two or three important victories won by it. When Hidalgo set out on his fatal trip from Saltillo to Monclova he left in command at Saltillo Don Ignacio López Rayón, who, when he heard of the disaster to his chief, almost immediately started to make his way back toward the central part of the country. His troops numbered between three and four thousand, and on their way south they met and defeated several detachments of the royalist army, capturing a good many field guns and a quantity of supplies. The rich and important city of Zacatecas received the patriot army with open arms, an event which awoke the representatives of the Spanish gov-

ernment to the fact that the revolutionary ideas had much more vitality than they had suspected. Indeed, this is the most noteworthy phenomenon of the troubled and uncertain years which followed Hidalgo's death. In the hearts of the common people the sentiment of liberty burned like a quenchless flame. No sooner were the patriot armies defeated and scattered than new recruits filled the depleted ranks as if rising from the ground.

Rayón, threatened at Zacatecas by Calleja, sped away again to the south, fighting by the way and usually defeated—at "el Maguey," "la Tinaja," and Valladolid, which city he failed to capture. Penetrating still farther into the mountains of Michoacán, he took possession of Zitácuaro, and there, on August 19, 1811, called a "junta" of four men—himself, Liceaga, Verduzco, and Yarza—which issued a proclamation and became a nucleus for the congress of Chilpancingo two years later.

This reappearance of a governing center for the revolution was joyously welcomed by the warrior priest Don Jose María Morelos, whose daring and breathless activity had for nearly a year been carrying terror to the Spanish forces all through the south. A little dark-faced Indian, who had obtained his theological training after years of manual labor and poverty, partly under Hidalgo while the great patriot was rector of the Colegio de San Nicolás, Morelos, when his old teacher came back to Valladolid at the head of an army, was curate of a near-by village. When he hastened to join the revolutionary movement, which exactly suited his tastes, Hidalgo,

instead of taking him along on his march toward the capital, sent him flying southward with orders to gather troops and, if possible, take possession of Acapulco, a port on the Pacific coast. Sallying forth alone and without resources, the martial priest so successfully carried out the orders of his superior as to enroll his name among the really great military leaders of the world. His exploits, if detailed, would make a romance as thrilling as any ever born in the imagination of genius. Without actually capturing Acapulco he kept it in a more or less constant state of siege, while at the same time systematically terrorizing the whole region south of Morelia to the coast.

Morelos, having united his counsels with those of the junta, left Rayón secure, as he thought, in Zitácuaro, a place of great natural strength, to await the attack of the royalist army under Calleja, while he, dividing his own forces, made vigorous demonstrations against Acapulco, Toluca, and Oaxaca, and even threatened Mexico City itself. But Calleja, whose savage conduct after his capture of Guajuato had earned for him the title of "the Cruel," easily routed Rayón, captured and devastated Zitácuaro, and once more dissipated the rallying center of the Independents.

But the fire of revolution, instead of being stamped out, was only scattered. It continued to burst into flames on every hand. For two years the warfare was scattering and guerilla-like, but often heroic. The siege of Cuautla, where Morelos resisted the whole vice-regal army for seventy days and then

withdrew with all his troops, was an exploit worthy of any general and time. Not less so was the conduct, on a critical occasion, of one of his subordinates, Don Nicolás Bravo. The government having captured the father of this officer, Don Leonardo Bravo, a brave and active patriot, Morelos offered in exchange for him eight hundred Spanish prisoners. The offer was refused. The prisoner was given choice between death and allegiance to Spain. Proudly refusing to take the oath, he was murdered by means of the degrading *garrote*. Whereupon Morelos, who was of iron temper, ordered Don Nicolás, son of the murdered man, to execute three hundred Spanish prisoners in reprisal. The prisoners were paraded and the order of the commanding general read to them in the presence of the insurgent troops. "Now," said Bravo, "I do not choose, even when ordered to do so, to imitate the wretched example of my enemies. I prefer a different kind of vengeance. I not only spare your lives, but you are free. Go." This "insurgent vengeance," as it was called, produced a profound impression.

Two years after the Zitácuaro junta, Morelos, who had but lately captured both Oaxaca and Acapulco, secured the assembling in Chilpancingo (now the capital of the state of Guerrero) of a still more representative congress or council. This was in September, 1813. The congress consisted of forty delegates, elected wherever the insurgents were in control and appointed by Morelos from other sections. It included the members of the previous junta, and besides them Jose María Cos, Carlos María Busta-

mante, Jose María Murguía, Jose Manuel de Herrera, and other famous patriots. As an example of the respect he wished paid to the body, Morelos promptly surrendered to it his military command, only to be at once elected by the congress captain general of all the insurgent forces. After something like a month of deliberation, the congress issued a manifesto consisting in part of a declaration of independence for Mexico and in part of a defense of the insurgent cause in the war then in progress. Among the curious and contradictory features of this document, which is chiefly interesting as an example of how liberal ideas grow, are its declaration that the war which the opponents of the Spanish government were then waging was in favor of Ferdinand VII, to whom they affirmed their loyalty, and its assertion that the insurgents were the true supporters of the Holy Catholic Church, and that if successful they would not admit into Mexico or tolerate there any other form of worship. It is to be remembered that in those years the Spanish government was in the hands of the Cortes, a parliamentary body restored by the juntas, which had made sweeping reforms in the matter of religious toleration, abolished the Inquisition, and otherwise reversed the traditional policies of the Spanish monarchy. Several members of this first Mexican congress, and a number of the chief military leaders up to that time, were priests. These facts will in part explain the statement made earlier that the real secret of the success of the Mexican revolution was in the ultimate identification with it of a strong Catholic sentiment.



But that which was even dearer to the Indians who composed the insurgent armies than their devotion to the mother Church was the dream of freedom. The Chilpancingo congress spoke out boldly concerning the right of Mexico to independence. Its members appealed in defense of their contention to the very recent uprising in Spain against the French intervention. Little by little, by the slow processes native to the manner of life of that day—all the slower among a people of contented temper and slight enlightenment—the sentiment of freedom was making its way.

Vanegas had been substituted in the viceroyalty by Calleja, who represented to the common people the very essence of scorn and cruelty. They might not understand the intricate politics of Europe, where just then Napoleon's power was tottering to its fall; they certainly could not make out why good priests like Cos and Morelos were fighting for the Guadalupean Virgin, while the archbishop and the Inquisition in Mexico were launching anathemas against all who opposed the viceroy, but they could understand the thought of freeing themselves from the exactions and cruelties of men like Calleja. And this was to them a very sweet thought. Thus it came about that as fast as the insurrection was put down it broke out again. And even though its leaders sincerely wished to keep the movement loyal to the Catholic monarchy of Spain, they had nevertheless set in motion forces which they could no longer control.

But Calleja, an able military leader, and now armed with all the prestige and resources of the vice-

royalty, pressed the insurgents hard. Opportunely came the news that Napoleon had replaced Ferdinand on the throne of Spain, who in turn had reëstablished the Inquisition, made tatters of the constitution devised by the Cortes, and inaugurated a truly Spanish *régime*. This was after Calleja's own heart. Overlooking completely, therefore, the loyalty of the insurgents to the puppet king while he had been fawning about the feet of Napoleon, he availed himself of the king's abrogation of all constitutional guaranties and began to make cruel havoc of such rebels as fell into his hands. One of these, ere long, was Morelos, who, anxious to preserve the congress, which had meantime become a vacuous and useless company of figureheads, exposed himself to capture on a certain critical occasion in order that its members might escape. He was loaded with chains, carried to Mexico, condemned by the Inquisition, which Calleja had put again into operation, and, for fear of the effect on the people, secretly executed in a village just outside the city, December 22, 1815. This was probably the last auto-da-fe of the Inquisition, that baleful institution having forever disappeared within a short time thereafter.

The insurgents were still numerous, but scattered. An ambitious general, Mier y Terán, dissolved the congress and thus broke up the last nucleus of an administrative center. In 1816 Calleja gave place as viceroy to Don Ruiz de Apodaca, a reasonable and conciliatory man. Nothing in the succeeding year availed to draw together the disintegrated forces of the revolution, and the kindness of Apo-

daca, and especially his disposition to favor the creoles and mestizos, brought many of the disaffected to take again the oath of allegiance to Spain.

A romantic episode of the otherwise quiet year of 1817 was the meteoric campaign of Don Francisco Javier Mina, a brilliant and bold young Spanish liberal of noble family, who, disgusted by the march of events in Spain, landed on the northeast coast of Mexico with a few companions, quite a number of them Americans, captured three hundred horses, and set out on a campaign in aid of the revolution so successful as to be fairly incredible. Reckless, watchful, fearless, indefatigable, he eluded or defeated every expedition sent in pursuit of him and for half a year flashed like a meteor from mountain range to mountain range, from city to city, through all the central part of Mexico. Captured at last and shot, he left a name and a story which warm the heart and brighten the page of Mexico's historians to this day.

For three years the flames of revolution only smoldered. Then again from Spain came a blast at which they burst once more into a far-flashing blaze. Ferdinand's foolish and childish absolutism had proved too much for even patient Spain. Napoleon, his protector, had gone into eclipse. The people rose up and thrust the constitution of 1812 into his very face. The Cortes assembled, and he made before it a pusillanimous and hypocritical address, agreeing to all that the liberals demanded and professing sentiments he by no means felt. If Spain seethed with these movements, Mexico was worse.

The last prop was at last knocked from beneath the loyalty of the aristocratic Church party. They were willing to support a Catholic government, but this new Spanish constitution, with an angry people behind it, struck at the dearest "rights" of the Church and its priests. At last the leaders of the Church party in Mexico were ready to join hands with the common people and cut loose from Spain. They still clung to their pet, Ferdinand, and part of the new plan was to have him leave Spain, where he was so much abused, and come to set up a truly Catholic monarchy in Mexico.

A tool was ready to their hand in Don Augustín Iturbide. An ardent Catholic and a soldier of considerable military experience, they managed to have him put in command of the next expedition against the insurgents. Don Vicente Guerrero, one of the undaunted patriots who had kept the field throughout all these years, gradually increasing his band of hardy troops, had made such rapid progress during 1820 that in the latter part of that year he was even venturing to threaten the capital. Iturbide was sent against him with the flower of the royalist army; but instead of fighting, he opened negotiations and disclosed to the insurgent leader a "plan" which he and the aristocratic leaders in Mexico had concocted. It proposed the union of all the forces then favoring independence from Spain for the promotion of that cause and the protection especially of religion. "Union, independence, religion" were to be guaranteed, symbolized by the red, green, and white flag which had just been devised, and which still flies as Mexi-

co's banner. Iturbide declared that the majority of the troops under him were ready to accept the plan and to fight if necessary for these "*tres garantías*." The offer was joyously welcomed by the revolutionists. Guerrero yielded the supreme command to Iturbide, the troops of the opposing armies and their leaders held a love feast, and the news went flying among scattered and despairing patriots from the Gulf to the Pacific Ocean. The viceroy cajoled, bribed, threatened, wheedled, but could do nothing and in disgust resigned and went home to Spain. He was succeeded July 30, 1821, by Don Juan O'Donoju, sixty-fourth and last Spanish viceroy, who died within a few months, having virtually agreed to the proposals of the united revolutionists and having never attained in Mexico to other than a nominal authority.

So acute was the quarrel in Spain during those years, between king and people, and so debilitated the mother country with her internal disturbances, that not much could be done by her to break the strength which now came to the cause of Mexican independence through the coalition between the Old Catholic and the Insurgent parties. So soon as the Spanish Cortes heard of O'Donoju's acquiescence in the revolutionary "plan," they repudiated it and denounced him as a traitor. But this served no purpose further than to register their protest. They had neither the men nor the money to enforce Spain's claims.

Thus at the last, after so much of travail, almost without effort and absolutely without bloodshed,



Mexico became politically independent. But fifteen years were yet to élapse before Spain, reluctant still, acknowledged that independence and forgave her wayward daughter.

## CHAPTER IV

### MOVING TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT

THE fifty years that followed Mexico's final rupture with Spain witnessed two abortive attempts to establish in New Spain the monarchical form of government. Both failed for the same reason: they were crushed by the weight of the sentiment in favor of popular government. The "Plan of the Three Guarantees," usually spoken of as the "*Plan de Iguala*," from the name of the village where it was first publicly announced, provided for the calling of a constituent congress which was to devise a monarchical form of government over which a prince of the house of Bourbon should be invited to reign. Ferdinand VII, however, to whom this offer primarily referred, did not care to make the venture; and besides, the Cortes had somewhat to say concerning the necessity of his remaining in Spain. No other Bourbon prince seems to have been available. The congress, of about one hundred members, met in February, 1822. The Spanish element supplied one of the three parties of which it was composed, but this party were much set back by the news of Spain's rude repudiation of the whole movement. A sort of *pro tempore* government had been set up in which Iturbide and others acted with O'Donoju, the deposed viceroy, up to the time of his death. The two other parties were, first, the adherents of Iturbide,

who had already conceived the idea of substituting him for the proposed Bourbon prince, and who called themselves "Iturbidistas"; and, secondly, the Republicans, who openly favored a popular government.

Three months after this rather nondescript body began its deliberations, in May, 1822, the soldiers stationed in the city—whether at his instigation or not is not known—"proclaimed" Iturbide emperor and fairly stampeded the people. The congress found itself bullied out of countenance by popular clamor and by a vote of seventy-seven to fifteen agreed to the demand of the soldiers and made the young *mez-tizo* colonel "emperor." In March of the next year he abdicated the throne and was forced to leave the country. The story of his "empire" is amusing and pathetic rather than tragic. He was an amiable and vain young man, really devoted to his country, but not of the stuff emperors are made of. Besides, the people were in no mood to trifle with the toys and gilded shows of a puppet royalty. They had serious business on hand and were serious men. The patriot Indian element and the wealthy and privileged classes, hereditary foes at best, were already closing with each other in that death grip of a struggle, concerning the kind of a government the country was to have, which is not yet decided. For as the years have gone by it has come to be clearly seen that the immense resources, social, financial, and religious, of the Roman Catholic hierarchy are always thrown to the side of privilege. The congress had succeeded in placing a loan or two at most disadvantageous rates, one in England and one in France, destined

later in the century to become the storm center of foreign intervention. This money was, however, rapidly dissipated. After the abdication of the emperor, the supreme power was placed temporarily in the hands of a governing board of three. Congress banished and pensioned Iturbide and adjourned.

In November, 1823, another congress was summoned and the work of formulating a constitution seriously undertaken. About the same time President Monroe announced his famous doctrine warning European governments that they were not to interfere in American affairs. This no doubt contributed not a little to the cause of Mexican independence, since Spain, at the instigation of the Holy Alliance, was at the time seriously considering the reconquest of her American colonies. This congress was divided into the "Federalist" and the "Centralist" parties, names which of themselves do not signify a great deal, since the Centralists corresponded to the Federalists in the early history of our own country, and the Federalists were Republicans. It was the old cleavage between the native and the Spaniard, the poor and the rich, the progressive and the conservative. It has not disappeared from Mexico to this day.

All winter they debated the constitution, the Republicans holding up the example of the United States as an ideal and their opponents showing only too truly the many and grave differences between the situation in Mexico and that in the American colonies forty years before. In January a tentative basis, consisting of twenty-six articles, was adopted, and

by October of the same year, 1824, the constitution itself was framed, adopted, and proclaimed. The Federalists had triumphed at most points, and the document was modeled in large measure upon the constitution of the United States. The provisional agreement had declared that the government was to be "popular, representative, federal, republican." But the Centralist party was able, backed by the inertia of a situation in which nobody really knew what to do, to force the insertion of two provisions which were to be fruitful of mischief. One declared the Catholic religion to be official and that no other would be tolerated; the other perpetuated the religious and military *fueros*. This word describes an inheritance from the dark days of the Middle Ages when warrior and priest were masters of the world. The *fueros* were the vested right of soldiers and churchmen to be tried by courts (forums, *fueros*) instituted by their own orders instead of by the law of the land. It was a much-coveted distinction, to which both orders clung long and desperately, though its inconsistency with popular government does not need to be pointed out. The constitution of 1824, though virtually never in full force, served nevertheless, thirty-three years later, as an excellent basis for that of 1857.

The newly constituted republic consisted of nineteen states and five territories. The constitution provided that the president should be elected by the vote of the state legislatures and for a term of four years. Don Félix Fernández, who had recently adopted the rather boastful name of Guadalupe Victoria, de-



scribing his devotion to the Virgin and his prowess in war, was the candidate of the Federalists, against Don Nicolás Bravo, put forward by the Centralists. Victoria was elected, and Bravo became vice president. Thus at last Mexico was politically free, with a duly constituted civil government. The conflict between the opposing parties went on. Private ambitions and jealousies among the leaders resulted in great bitterness of feeling, and the recently introduced order of Masonry added fuel to the flames. The first lodges formed were of the Scottish Rite, brought from France, and were identified with the wealthy Spaniards and the Church party. Presently, however, an accredited minister of the United States brought authority to establish a York Rite jurisdiction, which he did in connection with the strict Republican or patriot party. When secret, oath-bound societies meddle in politics, disaster usually results. "Escoceses" and "Yorkinos" long survived in Mexico as rallying cries, the symbols of much bitter feeling.

Victoria was the only president who served out a constitutional term under the instrument of 1824, and his wound up in a bloody wrangle. Nicolás Bravo, Vicente Guerrero, Guadalupe Victoria, Antonio López de Santa Ana—names all of them made notable by the part their bearers had taken in freeing the country from Spain—together with other able and ambitious military leaders, now began that petty struggle among themselves which was to keep the country in turmoil for nearly fifty years. It is an intricate and tedious story, and depressing withal,

The most prominent figure in it for many years was Santa Ana, a man of considerable military ability, but so despotic in his temper as to be absolutely unfit for any position of civil authority. His only conception of a government for his country was a dictatorship, with himself as dictator. Once or twice even when he had tired of governing—for which, indeed, he had no real taste—and retired to the privacy of his country estates, he seemed to think it perfectly proper any day the whim seized him to assume again the reins of absolute power.

It was during this period of virtual anarchy that the unfortunate war with the United States occurred. The citizens of the Mexican state of Texas, who were largely Anglo-Saxons, weary of the irregular and unsatisfactory mode of government, and desiring closer affiliation with their relatives in the United States, asserted their independence and waged a successful war for liberty. By the time they were ready to apply for admission into the Union, Mexico, realizing what she had lost, made a fierce effort to stop the movement, only to lose before the war was over far more of territory than that originally involved.

Ten years after the war with the United States, the patriot party at last began to take those decisive steps so long needed. Partly impelled by the poverty of the government and partly because of dear-bought insight into the real cause of the persisting vitality of the reactionary party as against free and representative government, Gómez Farías, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Benito Juárez, Melchor Ocampo, Guillermo

Prieto, and their immortal companions, in the final desperate struggle for liberty, laid hands on the treasures and vested rights of the Church.

Benito Juárez was a jurist by temper and training. During a term as governor of his native state of Oaxaca he had formulated a code of laws for that state—the first Mexican code, it is believed, ever proclaimed. A little later, banished by the overweening jealousy of Santa Ana, then dictator, he was forced to spend more than a year in the United States. This time he employed (at New Orleans) in a careful study of the laws and principles underlying that country's institutions; so that when he was, after a few years (in 1855), appointed chief justice, under President Alvarez, he promptly formulated a law for the better "administration of justice." This law struck a deathblow at the *fueros*, under which, ever since the Middle Ages, ecclesiastics and soldiers had enjoyed the privilege of trial for crime by special courts of their own order. How grave and far-reaching an encroachment on popular liberty such special privileges are can scarcely be conceived by those who have never known anything but strict equality before the law. The ecclesiastical courts, especially, were even more of a farce than the courts-martial, and the exemption of members of religious orders from any adequate punishment for crimes, to say nothing of misdemeanors, was a source of constant and acute exasperation to the common people.

Priests, friars, and soldiers banded together in a furious resistance against the attack on their precious prerogatives. But, though the conflict was

long and sanguinary, the law stood. It was not merely the sturdy "little Indian" who was warring against these hoar anachronisms. The tide of enlightened modern sentiment, the on-coming avalanche of the rights of man, bore down upon these crumbling monuments of feudal days and crushed and buried them forever.

The other measure, equally vital to the republic and equally odious—perhaps even more hateful—to the Church, the nationalizing of Church property, was not devised out of hand like the abolition of the *fueros*. As far back as 1833, Gómez Farías, one of the ablest financiers Mexico ever produced, suggested, as a possible mode of meeting the financial crisis to which the defenders of the government had come, the sequestration of some of the vast holdings of the Church. The Church, he said, gets the full benefit of the government's protection; yet, though she is rich while all others are poor, she contributes nothing to the government's aid. Again in the emergency of the war with the United States he made a like suggestion. The Church authorities, instead of meeting these intimations with good will, listened to them with cold disdain. After a sharp debate in congress, however, this second effort of the great financier took the form, in 1848, of a forced loan from the Church to help meet the expenses of the war that had just closed.

By this time Gómez Farías was beginning to feel the burden of age. In Benito Juárez, Melchor Ocampo, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, and other ardent young patriots, he had found, however, faithful dis-

ciples. These took up the conflict where he left off. The straits of the Church party brought Santa Ana, temporarily disgraced by his failures in the campaigns against the Americans, back to power again. With the singular fatuity which ever afflicted him when dealing with civil government, he promptly proclaimed himself not president, but dictator. This was in 1853. He compromised with the leaders of the Church party as to this forced loan and thus solidified them in his support. But the very name of dictator was hateful to the majority of the people, and in a short time the patriotic element rallied once more in such force that Santa Ana was driven again into exile and Juan Alvarez, an old but patriotic Indian general, placed in the presidential chair. It was as minister of justice under him that Juárez brought out his reform law for the administration of justice.

Alvarez gave way in the autumn of 1855 to Ignacio Comonfort, who was at the time supposed to be a stanch liberal and as such had been elected president. He appointed Lerdo de Tejada his secretary of the treasury, and within a very short time this disciple of Gómez Farías brought to the cabinet his project for the confiscation and sale of mortmain properties. This law was in imitation of similar enactments on the part of nearly all European governments. In Mexico, as elsewhere, it lay almost wholly against the Catholic Church and its several religious orders. These were virtually the only holders of property that could rightly be classified as mortmain. The law was approved by the cabinet of Comonfort



and passed by the liberal congress. But Comonfort himself, whether bribed thereto, or because of natural timidity, began to waver in his assertion of liberal principles. The Church party, already aroused by the abolishment of the special ecclesiastical courts under the law of Juárez, were driven to even fiercer resentment by this attack on their property.

Meanwhile, during the same year, 1856, a constituent convention or congress was laboriously hammering out a new constitution. Its members freely admitted that this was to be cast largely upon the basis of the constitution of the United States of America. That involved precisely most of the principles underlying the reform laws that had just been promulgated, though they had not yet been carried into effect. In spite of the half-hearted backing of the president, the document, when finished, in 1857, was adopted by an almost unanimous vote of the body that had framed it. The aged Gómez Farías, amid the reverent applause of the whole assembly, tottered forward on the arms of his sons to affix his signature to this instrument, the fruition of his fondest hopes during a long and strenuous life. The principle of equal rights before the law was, as a matter of course, included as fundamental in the constitution. The loss of the Church's special prerogatives and of the right of its priesthood to support by taxation was also implied, as the instrument made no mention of a state Church and declared that worship should be free (Art. 9). The entering wedge on the subject of property was in the form of a brief statement (Art. 27) that no corporation, civil or ec-

clesiastical, should hold real estate, except such as is strictly necessary for its own purposes.

Upon the proclamation of the constitution the gathering storm of opposition broke. Comonfort was not a sufficiently resolute man to face the conflict which all saw was inevitable and was torn with conflicting emotions by the distress of his mother, an ardent Catholic, to whom he was deeply devoted. The champions of freedom had at last laid hands upon those time-honored abuses which had hitherto thwarted all their efforts and proposed to sweep them out of existence. The wealth and intelligence and close organization of the ecclesiastical opposition party, backed by the blind devotion of the great host of adherents of the Church, made a most formidable combination. Comonfort, weakly yielding for a time, enough to throw the control of affairs at the capital of the republic and most of the machinery of the federal government into the hands of the conservatives, at last found his position between his own cabinet and the enemies of the constitution so uncomfortable that he slipped out of the country and was lost to the struggle. This brought Juárez, president of the supreme court, into the presidential chair about the beginning of 1858. Juárez had long held, with Gómez Farías, ideas concerning the property and power of the Catholic Church more radical than any that had, up to that time, been embodied in the legislation. Seeing that the issue was at last joined and that nothing but drastic measures could sustain the liberal cause, one of his first acts was to proclaim (in 1859) on the authority of himself and his cabinet

—congress not being at the time in session—a law “nationalizing”—that is, confiscating to the uses of the government—all the productive properties of the Catholic Church. This was in strict conformity with the article of the constitution that no corporation should hold any more property than it needed for its specific purposes. It added to the mortmain holdings which had been sequestered under the law of Lerdo all the productive real estate and the immense income from mortgages on real estate which made the Catholic Church at that time the possessor, as has been estimated, of at least one-third the total wealth of the country. A little later, during the stress of the war which immediately broke out, these enactments, known as the “*Leyes de Reforma*,” were enlarged and confirmed. They were gathered up and incorporated in a constitutional law a good many years later, known as the Lerdo law of 1874. It was promulgated during the presidency of Lerdo de Tejada—not Don Miguel, the minister of Comonfort in 1856, but his younger brother, Don Sebastián, who was president from 1873 to 1876.

The abolition of the religious orders was a measure closely involved with this same church property question. It began in 1857, when, shortly after the promulgation of the constitution, while Comonfort still showed some little energy in its enforcement, a revolution broke out against his government under the lead of the ecclesiastical authorities in Puebla. The president in person led the army of the federal government for the suppression of this revolt. The campaign was brief, but bloody and decisive, resulting in

a complete victory for the government. Since the uprising had been excited by the bishop of Puebla and his associates in the Church, the victorious president promptly confiscated and sold enough of the Church property in that state to pay the expense of the campaign. Returning to Mexico, it was reported to him that members of the order of Franciscans, who had a huge and wealthy monastery in the very heart of the city, had been plotting against the government. Suspicious already and not in a mood to be very tolerant of such things, Comonfort promptly issued a decree banishing the entire order and confiscating their property. Through the monastery itself he opened a wide street, which is still called Independence Street. The large chapel which belonged to the establishment remained for a good many years in the hands of the government and was then bought by a representative of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the use of that Church. It was later, through some mismanagement, thrown on the market, and wealthy Catholics bought back the old church and opened it again for Catholic worship.

During the conflict which began in 1858, and did not really terminate till 1867, Juarez found himself under the necessity of abolishing all the remaining religious orders. The Jesuits had already fallen into ill repute and been banished from a number of European countries. Their organization was so compact, and their general officers so ambitious, that they had been during their century of existence not unfrequently in collision with the pope and the Roman Catholic Church itself. The Franciscans and

the Augustinians had been extremely active as missionaries in the early history of Mexico. Their friars had had much to do with conciliating and controlling the native population. As an outcome of their success, and in the same way as has been exhibited in almost every other country where they have had a hold, they had accumulated vast wealth. These accumulations, reacting upon the orders themselves, had served to corrupt them and cause their degeneration. When the question finally arose as to whether they should be allowed to retain this wealth, they were joined as one man against the liberal government. Seeing the power for evil of their close organization and unanimity, President Juárez, whose only aim was the establishment of a popular government, cost what it might, cut this Gordian knot by prohibiting religious associations altogether. That is to say, men and women under vows were permitted to live in Mexico, but not to live together in the same house. This radical attack upon a social and religious system which had existed not merely unchallenged, but even approved by government and people, for more than three hundred years, is an example of the methods of this Indian patriot.

The French intervention, involving the unhappy reign and death in Mexico of Maximilian of Austria, was but an incident in the great struggle between conservatives and liberals. It is true that it was a dream of the Third Napoleon, who was in fact much abler as a dreamer than as a ruler. It is also true that it was the realization of a cherished plan of his Spanish wife, an ardent Catholic and a devout



believer in the theory that the only right government for any people is a Catholic monarchy. Louis Napoleon wished to see Mexico a kingdom subservient to the world-wide French empire, which he, like his great predecessor, thought himself raised up to found. Eugenie, his wife, wished to see Mexico brought again into the class of devout monarchies ruled by devout ecclesiastics, subservient to the Church in Spain and Rome. But neither of these dreamers would have dared to take open measures to carry out such plans had not the Church party in Mexico itself held out treasonable hands to them.

Just as the enthusiasm for a liberal government under popular and representative forms had persisted in the minds of the patriotic and liberty-loving element in Mexico's population during the whole period since the days of Hidalgo, so during all those fifty years the Catholic party in that country had with equal stubbornness held to its original purpose of making the country a truly faithful kingdom under a believing and properly approved monarch. There had scarcely been a day during all those years when some representative of the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Mexico was not diplomatically feeling about in Europe for a man who might become king of Mexico. The thing may seem absurd to the reader of these lines and indeed, in view of all the developments on this side of the Atlantic during the past hundred years, it was absurd; yet it did not so appear to these conservatives. Their instincts were wholly aristocratic. They had no faith in the people and believed democracy to be essentially hostile

to religion, if not atheistic. The archbishops and bishops who constantly bestirred themselves concerning this matter were but following therein the illustrious example of their predecessors, who, through all the history of New Spain as a Spanish province, had constantly kept its viceroys in hot water by their interference in civil affairs. The Roman Catholic Church has never had any mind to accept a separation between Church and state.

There can be no sort of question that Maximilian was only persuaded to undertake the precarious venture of establishing an empire in Mexico when convinced that the real leaders among the Mexicans themselves desired it. An ingenuous and open-minded young man, while a narrow Catholic, he was in no sense a tyrant in his temper and had not the slightest disposition to embark upon the enterprise of governing a people entirely unrelated to himself, unless it was in answer to a demand of the people themselves. It will be sufficient to touch briefly here upon the manner in which Napoleon inveigled England and Spain into a seeming support of his enterprise of interference. While he was secretly persuading Maximilian to accept the venture, and arranging with the Catholic party in Mexico to present the invitation to him in such a way as to make the impression that it was the unanimous wish of the whole Mexican people, he was arranging with England and Spain to make a demonstration against Mexico ostensibly for the purpose of securing the payment of her obligations.

There were some bonded debts held in these sev-

eral countries that had been drawing interest for a good many years. When the collision first began between Juárez and the Church party in 1858, the conservatives, by the carelessness or treason of Comonfort—historians are not agreed as to which it was—held the capital city and controlled the principal resources of the country. Juárez was barely able to assemble and provision the troops that were needed to protect the threatened constitution and the tottering republic. In an unguarded moment, and to meet the emergency of a dark hour, he issued, in 1859, a proclamation suspending temporarily the payment of interest on these foreign obligations. The men who held the bonds in France and England and Spain raised a great outcry. The English government, prompt as it always is to defend the interests of its citizens, began measures for the dispatching of an armed demonstration in order to convince the government of Mexico that it must pay its debts. At this juncture Napoleon interposed, suggesting that France, Spain, and England make common cause, but concealing from both Spain and England his real purpose.

The plan was agreed upon. The three governments sent their war vessels to the coast of Mexico, and France took occasion to dispatch along with them transports carrying a small army. Representatives of the government of Juárez explained the situation to the entire satisfaction of the official sent along with the English warships and entered into a compact with him to resume the payment of interest and to provide for the refunding of the debt so soon

as it was possible. About the same time the English government discovered what Napoleon really was working for—that is, the usurpation of the Mexican government by means of his tool, Maximilian—and promptly and rather roughly denounced the treachery, declaring that England would be no party to it. The Spanish government also, having made a satisfactory agreement concerning the money question with the ministers of Juárez, withdrew from further coöperation and retired its vessels. Meantime, the designs of the French emperor became a matter of common knowledge.

It will be necessary, however, to go back for a moment in order to trace more minutely the events which in Mexico itself led up to the situation existing in 1864. During 1859, 1860, and 1861, the war between the generals who supported the government of Juárez and the constitution of 1857 and those who were under the direction of the Church party continued with great bitterness. After the flight of Comonfort at the beginning of 1858, the conservatives established a government in Mexico of which Zuloaga was for a time the leader. Several states to the north meantime formed a coalition and raised an army to support the constitution. This army was defeated at Salamanca, March 8, 1858; and for the constitutionalists thereafter disaster followed disaster. Only Vera Cruz, where Juárez had taken refuge, held out. Generals Miramón and Márquez became the leading spirits of the conservative party, Miramón occupying a so-called presidential office for two or three years. The sympathy of the mass

of the people with republican principles gradually strengthened the cause of Juárez as the war progressed. Many citizens emerged from the state of indifference into active partisanship with the patriots, goaded by the inexcusable cruelties of the clerical leaders. Márquez, especially, was guilty of so many and such atrocious murders that his name is execrated to this day in the country which he lived but to disgrace and where he died near the end of the century, old, poor, decrepit, forgiven by a generous government, but unpardoned by an outraged public.

Again and again Miramón, who was an able military leader, menaced Vera Cruz, but it remained impregnable. During the existence of this short-lived and futile conservative government, it negotiated a ruinous loan at the hands of a Swiss banker named Jecker, an obligation that afterwards figured largely in the quarrel between France and Mexico as an alleged *casus belli*. All that it produced, and all that the conservatives were able later to wrest from the people in forced loans and otherwise, was at last exhausted, while the ragged patriots, instead of diminishing in numbers, seemed to increase. Under Generals González Ortega, Degollado, Berriozábal, Zaragoza, and others, the constitutionalists kept up the fight, becoming bolder and bolder and not at all dismayed by an occasional defeat. In December of 1860 Miramón staked all in a great battle with Ortega and was overwhelmingly defeated. He lost his artillery, his army was annihilated, and he himself barely escaped from the field with a few followers. Returning hurriedly to Mexico, he turned over



all authority remaining to him to the *Ayuntamiento* and left the country. January 1, 1861, Juárez entered his capital in triumph.

During that year the French troops were landed in Mexico. The government at once entered into an agreement with the envoys who accompanied them, representing France, Spain, and England, that these troops should only occupy certain specified points, pending the negotiations concerning the financial questions which had brought about the invasion. These negotiations were not very lengthy. A settlement satisfactory to Spain and to England was, as has been stated, soon reached, and their war vessels were withdrawn, all the sooner, indeed, because in both these countries the purpose of Napoleon began to be suspected, and the public and the opposition members in parliament began to ask uncomfortable questions. Napoleon's plans being not yet mature, he was almost at a loss for an excuse to keep the soldiers in Mexico till the time should arrive for his *coup d'état*. Some of the pretexts he made use of were a good deal like those the wolf urged against the lamb in the fable. As a witty speaker in the French parliament said in debate, "First it was declared that we must invade Mexico because Mexico is calling for us; now it is to punish her for not calling for us!"

The stubbornness with which the French troops persisted in remaining on Mexican soil after the others had retired but confirmed Juárez in his already well-grounded suspicion that Napoleon had designs on the independence of Mexico. The astute presi-

dent could not fail to have information of the manner in which the Mexican conservatives were playing into the hands of the invader. Profoundly stirred by the treachery of this attack on his country's freedom, and foreseeing but too clearly the bitter conflict which was inevitable unless it should be soon checked, Juárez issued early in 1862 a proclamation warning both Mexicans and foreigners against taking part in this attempt on the nation's liberty and declaring that all who disregarded his warning placed themselves outside the law. It was this proclamation which was later held to warrant the death sentence against Maximilian himself.

In the spring of 1862 Count Lorencez landed in Vera Cruz with a large addition to the French troops and at once advanced into the interior. By the middle of April hostilities began. The recently defeated conservatives welcomed the French, and in Córdoba, which the invaders had taken possession of, "pronounced" against Juárez and set up a rival government with Almonte at its head. At the beginning of May the French advance reached Puebla, where, on May 5, was fought the most famous battle in Mexico's history. To the surprise of everybody concerned, the ragged peasant army of the patriots defeated the French veterans. Zaragoza, the Mexican general, could not hold his ground and later temporarily retired, but the fact remained that the Mexicans had proved the French to be not invincible. The country thrilled with patriotic pride at the news, and scarce a city in the republic is to-

day without its street or plaza called *Cinco de Mayo* (Fifth of May).

For nearly a year Puebla interposed a barrier to the French who had been driven back from its gates. Then, after a long and terrible siege by Marshal Forey, it was forced to capitulate, the patriots losing nearly ten thousand men in prisoners, including Generals Ortega, Alatorre, Berriozábal, and others. Ortega's note of surrender is a proud, dignified, and patriotic document, which deeply impressed even his enemies.

Juárez was thereupon driven from his capital, which became untenable when Puebla fell. The French troops and the conservatives occupied it, and the plans for importing an emperor were rapidly consummated. One of Napoleon's pretexts was the Jecker claim. Now, Jecker was not a Frenchman, but a Swiss, and the money had not been borrowed by Juárez, but by the conservatives, who were doing all they could to destroy the government of Juárez. Nevertheless, the president, rather than submit to intervention, had at last agreed to assume this debt. Jecker was well protected. He held bonds covering more than twenty-five times the amount of money he had advanced. The whole thing was absurd.

The truth is, Napoleon hoped to get money out of Mexico. He expected to help Maximilian's empire in such a way as to bring it under lasting obligations to himself. Then he counted on colonizing French settlers in the rich mining regions of the country he was attempting to exploit. In it all he seems to have quite left out of his calculations the

wishes of the Mexican people—unless, indeed, he allowed himself to be persuaded by Eugenie that the ecclesiastics who were clamoring for a Catholic monarchy were the true representatives of that people.

The French soldiery and the subservient conservatives set up a quasi government in Mexico. Napoleon's money was paying the wages of foreign troops who were harassing the scattered liberal armies and driving Juárez from one city to another, farther and farther north. By this time there were nearly fifty thousand French soldiers in Mexico.

An "assembly of notables" consisting of two hundred and thirty-one members, representing ostensibly every Mexican state, was called together in Mexico City, July, 1863. It adopted an "act" declaring in favor of the monarchical form of government and offering the throne to Ferdinand Maximilian Archduke of Austria. Several representatives of the conservative party, then in Europe, were appointed a committee to make the official tender to Maximilian, and, if he failed to accept, to any other European Catholic prince *whom the emperor of the French should designate*. To the surprise of everybody, Maximilian replied to the committee that he was unwilling to go to Mexico unless invited by the people of that country. The matter was therefore referred back to Marshal Bazaine, then in command of the French troops in Mexico and the virtual head of the conservative government, and a vote favorable to Maximilian of all the prominent cities then "occupied by the French bayonets" was promptly secured. Maximilian, upon news of this, declared himself sat-

ified. He at once signed a compact releasing his claim to the Austrian throne (he was a brother of Franz Josef) and another with Louis Napoleon, the latter exhibiting but too plainly the animus of the wily Frenchman. It was a contract that from the income of the Mexican empire should be returned the money advanced to pay Maximilian's debt on his palace at Miramar and for the expense of his voyage to Mexico, the outlay for the French troops in Mexico, the Jecker claim, etc.—in all amounting to one hundred and seventy-three millions of dollars; a good round public debt to hang about the neck of an infant empire.

This was in April, 1864. By the 29th of the following May the new emperor with his wife Carlota had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, and the curtain rose upon a great modern tragedy: in the month of June, 1867, just three years later, it was rung down. Maximilian was dead and Carlota insane.

Having traced with some particularity the events that led up to the intervention in the affairs of Mexico of the French emperor and to the setting up of the so-called empire of Maximilian, it will not be necessary to follow the history of that empire in detail. From the point of view of Maximilian, the whole thing proved a ghastly mistake. But Maximilian was amiable rather than able. He was as deficient in real acuteness of mind as in firmness of will. From the beginning he allowed himself to be victimized by the designing Napoleon and the reactionary party in Mexico, the latter availing themselves in influencing him of the sanctions of the Church.



Caught in the vortex of a deadly struggle between warring elements among the Mexican people, his sympathies were rather with those who opposed than with those who supported him. He was especially unhappy in the selfishness, the avarice, the cruelty, and the retrograde political theories of those who surrounded his court and became his advisers. It was also his unenviable lot, a foreigner himself, to depend for the stability of his government upon hiring foreign troops, execrated by the Mexicans and themselves by no means enamored of the task that had been set them.

Besides these essential weaknesses of his situation, he was opposed by the bull-dog tenacity of Juárez and the natural instincts of virtually the whole Mexican people. The moral strength of this resistance was, early in the struggle, vastly increased by an ill-judged procedure upon Maximilian's part. In the autumn of 1865 it was reported to him that Juárez had crossed the border into the United States. This, according to the constitution, forfeited his right to the presidency. He had indeed been careful not to take the step, but Maximilian doubtless believed the report which came to him. Instigated probably by Bazaine, he promulgated therefore, October 3, 1865, a decree to the effect that all persons found in arms against the empire, now the only existing and rightful government, should be treated as rebels and, after trial by court-martial, be put to death. Almost immediately several prominent officers in the insurgent army, Generals Arteaga and Salazár and Colonels Díaz and Villagómez, were captured at Uruá-

pam and executed. The French troops were commanded by their officers no longer to take prisoners, but to put the vanquished to the sword. These measures naturally produced a tremendous reaction.

The empire had no income worth speaking of and from the first began to sink into hopeless bankruptcy. When the close of the Civil War in the United States left the American government free to turn its attention to the manifest affront to the Monroe doctrine of which Napoleon had been guilty, and with a great army of veteran troops at hand to enforce its demands; and when the conviction was at last forced upon Napoleon himself that Mexico was not the gold mine he had imagined it to be; and when also the patriot army, rallying from the defeats that had marked the beginning of this last struggle, began to press hard upon the heels of the retiring French troops, it was plain to be seen that the toy empire was doomed.

The rapidly shifting panorama of Mexico's interior affairs during the dark days when our own country was beginning slowly to recover from her gigantic and bloody struggle is one of the romances of history. The glittering court of Maximilian and Carlota, who seem now like children playing with gilded toys upon the edge of an abyss; the cynical double-dealing of Napoleon, as treacherous with Maximilian in withdrawing the French troops as he had been with Mexico in introducing them; the sturdy constancy of the little Indian president, driven from pillar to post, till he was crowded at last against the very northern boundary of the country

at Paso del Norte (now named Juárez in his honor), yet stoutly proclaiming himself through it all the true and legitimate ruler of Mexico; the gradual development into deadly efficiency of the ragged patriot forces—all this is a story well worth the telling, but which is too long for these pages.

In 1866, hurried thereto by a rough intimation from W. H. Seward, then the American Secretary of State, and by the presence on the northern border of Mexico of a body of veteran American troops, Napoleon advised Maximilian that he was going to withdraw the French army from Mexico. Foreseeing the inevitable result of this, Maximilian reluctantly agreed that his wife should hurry away to the French court to see if she might prevail upon Napoleon to alter his decision and to keep the "Treaty of Miramar," as it was called. That treaty provided for the gradual withdrawal of the French troops during a number of years. But Napoleon was feeling too severely the pinch of the dead expense of sustaining this army and rightly dreaded a collision with the United States. His mind was made up. Carlota upon her arrival was treated with such scant politeness, and her pleadings so rudely rejected, that she left Paris the victim of a mania of fear and anxiety which soon destroyed her reason. Her interview with the pope a little later was the raving of a hysterical and already half-crazed woman.

Maximilian, upon the news of this, and witnessing the preparations for the retirement of the French soldiers, was ready to abdicate and return himself to Europe. Well for him had he carried out this

thought. Indeed, he did set out for Vera Cruz, having prepared a proclamation in which he abandoned the throne, and went as far as Orizaba. But the Mexican clericals complained, cajoled, and threatened. They appealed to his sense of honor and his supposed obligations to them. The officials of the Church promised to replenish his depleted treasury from their strong box. A majority of his Council of State refused to accept his abdication. So the proclamation was not issued, and at last, after several months of vacillation, he returned to the capital.

Failing the French generals, he now welcomed back to Mexico the conservative military leaders, Miramón and Márquez. These men, though attached to his cause, he had hitherto kept abroad on various missions, since their reputation in Mexico was somewhat unsavory. To them he now intrusted the task of reorganizing the imperial army. He selected a new cabinet and, throwing himself into the hands of the Mexican conservative party, prepared to witness the final act in that long and losing struggle which it had waged with the forces of freedom. His wife was already a hopeless lunatic; his brother, the Emperor of Austria, had forbidden him to return to his native land; his mother wrote him insisting bitterly that he perish amid the ruins of his empire rather than longer be a dupe of Napoleon; his dream of establishing a popular and successful government for Mexico was plainly blighted. Under the stress of these afflictions he bore himself with

a manly serenity more creditable to him than anything else in his career.

The funds that had been promised from the coffers of the Church were given but grudgingly. As rapidly as possible the royalist troops were got into some sort of organization. The city of Querétaro, being a stronghold of the Church, which was at that point very wealthy, seemed to be a favorable place for their concentration. Maximilian, placing himself at the head of the army, took up his quarters there, and the constitutionalists, accepting the challenge, began to concentrate upon this city, famous already as the birthplace of the revolution of 1810. It lacks much, however, of being an ideal place in the military sense for defensive operations. The republican troops, having already cleared the northern part of the republic of their enemies and opened the way for the return southward of Juárez and his cabinet, had been gathered into one body under General Escobedo until they outnumbered the royalists, whom they probably also excelled in military skill and *morale*. This Maximilian himself, with that frankness which was one of his most attractive traits, acknowledged. Writing a short time before to one of his ministers concerning the need of reorganizing his own army, he said of his opponents: "The republican forces, wrongly represented as demoralized and united solely by the hope of pillage, prove by their conduct that they form a homogeneous army whose stimulus is the courage and perseverance of a chief moved by a great idea—that of defending the national independence which he believes threatened by



our empire." In such words he confesses that it was a misconception which gave birth to his ill-advised and most unfortunate decree of October 3, 1865.

Querétaro, after sharp preliminary fighting, was surrounded by an overwhelming force and besieged from the middle of March to the middle of May, 1867. May 15 the besiegers broke into the city. Its defenders made a sally, and Maximilian with a few followers attempted to escape. On a neighboring hill, the "*Cerro de las Campanas*," he was captured, brought back to the now surrendered plaza, and within a few days put upon trial before a court-martial.

The one blot upon the proceedings of the victorious republican government on this occasion was the constitution of this court. It was made up of a lieutenant colonel and six captains, all so youthful as to excite the suspicion that they had been selected in accordance with some plan to insure their verdict. With this exception the proceedings were entirely regular. The charges were treason, filibustering, etc., based almost wholly on the presidential decree of 1862. Miramón and Mejía, the two leading Mexican conservative generals, were placed on trial at the same time and under the same charges. All were allowed able counsel, but all were nevertheless convicted and condemned to death.

Juárez, now at San Luís Potosí, not far away, was pressed to modify the sentence of Maximilian. Telegrams poured in upon him from all over the world. Influential Mexicans and foreigners went post-haste to plead with him in person. His feelings were deeply moved upon, but he remained firm.

"The welfare of the people demands it," he replied to every plea; "I cannot set myself above the public good." To a protest which reached him from South America he replied with some warmth that he was doing as he did not for his own sake, nor even for that of Mexico alone, but for the sake of every struggling American republic. The student of history, however keen may be his sympathy with the unfortunate Maximilian, will probably have to agree that the instincts of Juárez in this matter were sound. He settled for a long time, if not finally, the question of whether it is worth while for a scion of European royalty to attempt the transfer of his authority to American soil.

On June 19, 1867, the sentence of the court, passed five days before, was executed. Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía were taken to the *Cerro de las Campanas* and shot. They met death like brave men, Maximilian exclaiming, "May my blood be the last that is shed in sacrifice for this country!"

The infamous Márquez had been dispatched a short time before the fall of Querétaro to Mexico for reënforcements. There he gathered a small force and, instead of returning to the help of his chief, employed his time in wreaking private and petty grudges in his usual brutal manner. Meantime Porfirio Díaz had rallied the scattered patriots in the south and laid siege to Puebla, the scene of so many conflicts between royalists and republicans. Before Márquez could come to its aid he had forced its surrender, April 2, 1867; after which he immediately proceeded to invest Márquez in Mexico City. During the in-

terval between the fall of Querétaro and the execution of Maximilian he was slowly pressing in upon this last stronghold of the imperial troops, unwilling to storm the city where there were many adherents of the republic and which he foresaw would soon be forced to surrender. Márquez was at last put aside by others and by skillful hiding escaped when the city was captured. On June 20, the next day after the death of Maximilian, the capital of his empire was unconditionally surrendered to one of the youngest and one of the strongest of the patriot generals. The intervention was at an end. July 15, 1867, President Juárez, with his cabinet, the "*Inmaculados*," as they came to be called, quietly entered again the capital of his country.

## CHAPTER V

### FROM JUÁREZ TO DÍAZ

FOR the second time we come to the triumph of the republic over its foes, at home and from abroad. The coöperation of the Catholic Church with the enemies of a republican form of government became at last so open that it was no longer on either side even a pretended secret. That the strength of that body as an opponent lay more in its immense wealth than in its hold upon the common people, powerful as this was, had become evident to the leaders of the liberal party. From this it came to be with them a matter of public policy to cut the sinews of that strength by expropriation. When to this consideration was added the stern satisfaction of despoiling a powerful, implacable, but at last vanquished enemy, to say nothing of the crying demands of their own impoverished treasury, it may easily be guessed that the work of spoliation was thorough. Gómez Farías, Juárez, Lerdo de Tejada, Ocampo, and the rest were slow to be convinced that in the confiscation of the Church's wealth was the only hope of the republic; but having at last put their hand to the plow, they did not turn back.

While this is true, it is also to be said, to the credit of all concerned, that scarcely ever in history has a victorious party converted to the uses of the nation so large a booty with so little of scandal attaching to

individuals for appropriating to themselves for private use the fruits of public victory. Many a scarred veteran of the patriot army became, it is true, the proprietor of some huge shell of a ravished chapel or of the rambling and thick-walled cloisters of some abandoned convent. But this was always by virtue of a clear title from the federal government and meant that a poverty-stricken though victorious republic had no other means of rewarding the men who had been faithful to it. Juárez, the great leader, virtually all-powerful after the triumph of his party in 1867, was singularly indifferent to the blandishments of wealth. As he had proved himself incorruptible and unpurchasable in the days of his poverty and threatened defeat, so now he successfully met the still severer test of victory and power, emerging with an untarnished name.

Reconstruction after a period of civil war is at best a delicate and tedious business. In Mexico, when victory over the French brought peace at last, the task of Juárez and his associates was not merely reconstruction; it was rather construction. There had never been a civil government of independent Mexico worthy the name, and indeed, to tell the whole truth, the vice-regal government under Spain had been a good deal of a travesty on the name. While, therefore, at some points in the previous history of Mexico's affairs our rapid review of them has shown complex and puzzling situations, that period upon which we now enter will be found, if possible, more confusing still. No matter how ideally perfect a system of popular government may be, it remains



dependent for its success on the character of the people who adopt it. A single man of genius may be a successful monarch or military dictator. A small group of men, trained in the science of government, may carry on a centralized oligarchy. But if a government by the people is to succeed, the general average in character and intelligence of the people must be such as to fit them for the duties of sovereign citizenship. To be a sovereign citizen is, in other words, a very different matter from being a subject citizen. Much study has, at one time and another, been given to the elaboration of republican constitutions. But the most beautiful of these instruments will at times refuse to "march." It is the assumption of sovereign obligations by the citizen whose training and character have not made him a sovereign in spirit that has so repeatedly brought popular government into disrepute.

The best friend of Mexico will not deny that she has run, and is even yet running, a great risk at this point. Indeed, what else could have been expected? Had the hardy and self-reliant Indians whom Cortés found been put at once upon a course of training for it, it is probable that they might very soon have been brought to the point of readiness for self-government. But this was not done. The Spaniards of the sixteenth century exhibited in an uncommon degree that sense of superiority which too often possesses powerful and highly civilized people, rendering them oblivious to the human rights and claims of nations less favored. It did not occur to these conquerors that the natives of Mexico would ever again

wish or need to govern themselves. A distorted religious conception but accentuated the domineering nationalism which made the *conquistadores* indifferent to any rights of the Indians. They looked upon them as subjects of the evil one, to be reduced by any sort of means, fair or foul, to allegiance to Christ and his vicegerent on earth. As to their civil rights, history contains no evidence that their conquerors ever even thought of their having any. So greedy were they and the Spanish sovereign whom they represented of the gold of the New World that the despoiling of whole peoples of their sacred liberty in the effort to seize it seemed to them but an insignificant incident. Sad as is the spectacle of the religious fanaticism of these invaders, the *auri sacra fames*, which, like the lash of some unrelenting Fury, ever drove them on, is sadder still. In a burst of cynical confidence one of the Spanish leaders on a certain occasion explained to a dignified Indian chief the Spanish desire for gold. "The fact is," he said, "all our people suffer from a dreadful disease for which gold is the only known remedy."

In these two elements just indicated—the undertaking to convert, *vi et armis* if necessary, all these slaves of the devil to the service of his holiness the pope, and the exploitation as enemies of the Spanish crown of all who set up any barriers, however slight, to the seizure of their property—began the Spanish *régime* in Mexico. Had it been deliberately calculated to unfit the inhabitants of that country for exercising at any future period the privileges and the responsibilities of self-government, it could not

have been gauged with more disastrous accuracy. For to this suppression of individuality in the religious and civil realm was promptly added the social obloquy which could not but follow. Thus, in all the three avenues of moral expansion, the development of the Mexicans was hopelessly crushed and atrophied. In the social fabric, wealth and intellectual culture asserted their sway. In civil matters, the iron rule of the despot was enforced by a soldiery equipped with arms and an organization incomparably superior to any known to the Aztec warriors. In the realm of spiritual things, the despotism was even more absolute and irresistible. The Indians believed in the spirit world with that direct and unquestioning faith common to childlike nations. Of the terrors of that future state they entertained not the slightest doubt. Those terrors the priests held in their right hands. The whole life of the poor Indian, from his first faint cry to the moment of the death rattle in his throat, was weighed down by the sense of this spiritual overlordship. He must be baptized in unconscious infancy, confess, pay tithes, build churches, make pilgrimages, etc., all his life; and at the end, no matter how diligently he had kept the Church's rules, be shrived in dying, else all would be in vain. And for the shriving, as for the rest, he had to pay liberally and in advance. Indeed, he had to see to it still that his body after death rested in consecrated soil; for all of which he was offered the poor boon of a term in purgatory!

As an accompaniment of these varied forms of oppression—virtually unconscious oppression, be it

said, though the merit of the qualification is open to doubt—the denial of the right of the peons or *indígenas* to intellectual training came as a matter of course. It was a question, even, subject to grave discussion, whether they had souls. That they had minds fit to be trained was considered preposterous. To distinguish them from the natives, Spanish and creoles were called *gente de razón*, “people of reason.” The implication was that the Mexicans were incapable of reasoning. How a stupid notion of this kind could persist in the face of the facts of ordinary and constant observation must be accounted for by the reflection that those were the days of the deductive philosophy. People explained the world by means of previously formed conclusions, instead of formulating the conclusions themselves by observing and classifying the facts of life.

In proof of the intellectual sprightliness of the native Mexicans, facts indeed abounded. Despite the enormous advantages of the invading Spaniards, the Mexicans continued to hold their own in population as well as in every avenue of competition where the terms were at all equal. They intermarried with their conquerors without injury to the stock, and the *mestizos*, or children of mixed marriages, held their own with the domineering “old Spaniards” quite as well as did the creoles, that is, the people of pure Spanish blood born in Mexico. The careful student of Mexico’s history and of her population, while he will be forced to allow the disastrous consequences of the social and political system prevailing there for the past three centuries, will, nevertheless, discover

to his satisfaction that comparatively few of the ills from which that country suffers and has suffered are to be traced to the native defects of the native races. On the contrary, he is likely to conclude that few peoples could have submitted for three centuries to a despotism so complete and so ingeniously detrimental to national character and have emerged so creditably as have the Mexicans. The vitality—physical, intellectual, and moral—of a people who after this long enslavement were able to rise up and break the bonds that had held them, and who through a whole century of stubborn fidelity to liberty have kept on with their disheartening task of shaking off successive series of shackles, is itself the bow of promise for the future. Surely what Mexico may yet have to undergo before attaining to her ideal of a government by the people is less than what she has already undergone.

The prime requisites for the assertion of national liberty are that men shall know their rights and have the manhood to assert them. This demands both enlightenment of mind and strength of will. But in a republic men need not only to assert themselves, but to restrain themselves. Respect for the rights of others makes constant demands upon their power of self-control. Of the three necessary steps in the training of the sovereign citizen, this self-control is the last, the hardest, and the most essential.

The training which the Mexicans under Spanish rule received, instead of helping them in any of these essential things, hindered them in all. They were not instructed that they might know what are the



rights of men. They were not allowed to assert themselves as to anything, temporal or spiritual, that they might develop will power and self-respect. And most especially, being kept constantly in a state of childlike tutelage, they learned little of the meaning of self-control.

Concerning the first count in this bill of charges it is unfortunately possible to speak with but too much assurance. The oldest college on American soil, the Colegio de San Nicolás, now situated in Morelia, founded about 1544, was in the beginning a missionary agency for the preparation of Indian candidates for the priesthood. That training, in the conception of its founder, and even more so as carried on by those who took up his work, had little relation to the general subject of the education of the people. It was confined to a small and privileged class and was, moreover, of a highly technical and special character. This prototype of American colleges was indeed far too much a type of the sundry seminaries and monastic schools which were later scattered through New Spain. They had no appreciable effect in lifting up and illuminating the masses of the native population.

As the centuries crept by, the zeal and the unselfish enthusiasm of the early missionary days died out. The people were virtually all brought into allegiance to the Church. The schools, as a missionary agency, were no longer needed. That they were desirable for any other purpose seems to have occurred to nobody. The people were left in ignorance, and, since they knew no other possibility, it

was mostly contented ignorance. How sluggishly this great mass awoke to the stimulation of the ideas of freedom, of independence from the oppression that had weighed upon Mexico for so long, will be recalled by those who have followed even in brief outline the story of Hidalgo's uprising. It is but too evident, even to the casual student, that had not the movement for independence from Spain sprung up in Mexico at a time when the Spanish government was helpless—being during no small part of the struggle virtually nonexistent—it could never have succeeded. That other and similar and probably successful movements would have followed is quite certain. But it was only the nerveless state of Spain which gave opportunity at the time Hidalgo began his agitation for that slow and long-continued propaganda that at last took hold upon the untrained thought of Mexico's native population.

It was not merely in the failure to provide schools and to intervene directly in the mental training of the Mexican native races that Spain sinned against their intellectual development. That development was hindered, was indeed rendered virtually impossible, by the whole atmosphere in which these races had their first contact with European civilization. They were not allowed to think for themselves in regard to any of life's interests. The Church declined to permit it in religious things, because to think at all exposed them to the danger of thinking wrongly. Orthodoxy was held to be more desirable than intelligence. As the ecclesiastical system gradually departed from that primitive purity of purpose and of

interest in the welfare of the people which had marked the early missionaries, it grew into an elaborate scheme of prerogatives and dignities belonging to the priests and bishops, concerning which these dignitaries were excessively jealous and watchful. The due subjection of the people was a matter of first importance, and the obedience and acquiescence which were exacted of them left nothing to the chance of individual initiative.

Scarcely less autocratic were the social and civil exactions. On every hand the Indian was made to feel himself a nobody. He was "commended" to the care of "Christian" miners and land-owners in great herds, in order that he might be trained in the Christian faith. His labor, once his own, was now by some hocus-pocus made to enrich the *conquistador*. Innumerable petty social and civil exactions pressed upon him. He could not ride horseback. He was not allowed to dress in the same fashion as the Spaniards or to carry arms. The estimate put upon him is well defined by the rule that in a court of law the word of one Spaniard was of equal weight with that of six Indians.

The naturally amiable and submissive temper of the Mexican people was by such treatment gradually degraded to a servile and helpless attitude very far removed from that independence of spirit and sprightliness of mind essential to freemen. Indeed, as a matter of fact, many of the natives were reduced to slavery, and only the fierce denunciations of a few warm-hearted priests, with the intervention, from time to time, of a philanthropic viceroy, kept

the humane provisions of the Council of the Indias concerning human slavery from being abused even more than they were. The resistance offered by the poor Indians themselves was insignificant. The one good thing which their new religion did for them was to give them a definite doctrine of, and an abiding faith in, God. This faith was accompanied, unfortunately, by a sort of cheerful fatalism altogether congenial to their temper and condition. Whatever ills came to them they were in the habit of accepting with a shrug and a smile—*¡Es la voluntad de Dios!* ("It is the will of God.") The phrase was applied many times to situations in which its theological accuracy is not so evident as its devoutness of spirit.

The student of Mexican national development as affected by national character will often be at a loss whether to attribute certain aspects of that character to native and more or less ineradicable traits or to the influence of this long tutelage under Spain. As a people the Mexicans display no great aptitude for self-government. For this they have been much criticized. A sympathetic consideration of the influences from without that have molded them will serve to change much of that criticism to a kinder estimate. When to the duress under which they received foreign influences is added the repressive and enervating character of those influences, the wonder is not that since being thrown upon their own resources they should have done so ill, but that they have done as well as they have.

When all has been said that the fairest estimate

of the facts will warrant, it remains true that the Mexicans, previous to the advent of the Europeans, had taken only the first step toward the development of a national civilization. They were essentially a primitive and savage people. Excepting the arts of a rude sort of warfare, and some of the rudiments of civil government, largely still upon the tribal basis, they had everything to learn.

We have paused for these general considerations in order that there might be a more sympathetic understanding upon the part of the reader of the problem which Mexico faced when, in 1867, the French intervention having been brought to its end, she again undertook the task of self-government. The obstacles to a democracy by which she had been during fifty years repeatedly thwarted were now, in part at least, eliminated. The principal of these were outside interference, a monarchical tendency at home, ambitious military leaders, and a meddling hierarchy, doubly powerful through its immense wealth. The first and second of these were now effectually disposed of. With the blood-stained body of Maximilian were buried the hopes of the monarchists at home. His tomb is also a stumbling-block to European princes which has served to cool any ardor they might otherwise have developed for attempting to set up an American kingdom. Opposition from the two remaining foes was checked, but not ended. The clergy, stripped of their wealth and to a very large extent also of their prestige, remained nevertheless a potent influence in the life of the nation. As for ambitious and unscrupulous



soldiers, men who prefer selfish aggrandizement to the welfare of their country, it was, unfortunately, too much to expect that a type which had so long been conspicuous in Mexico's history would suddenly and finally disappear.

It was these restive military leaders who filled the land with turmoil during the four remaining years of the life of President Juárez. As soon as possible after gaining control in 1867 of the entire country, he issued a proclamation calling for a general election. Instead of limiting this to the ordinary choice under the constitution of a president, a chief justice, and the members of the national congress, he thought it an excellent time for the people to pass also upon certain constitutional changes which seemed to him desirable—provision for a senate, the conceding of a veto power to the president, etc. Since the constitution itself provided the proper order for its own amendment, many affected to see in this proclamation a disposition upon the part of Juárez to override it. The people, though for the most part they refused to vote on these new proposals, elected a congress favorable to Juárez, by whom he was in due course declared to be the constitutionally elected president. Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada was made president of the supreme court, an office carrying with it the succession to the presidency in the event of the president's death.

During the intervening months Juárez had taken occasion to proclaim a general amnesty for all the partisans of the government of Maximilian, though without conferring upon them the right to bear arms

or hold office. Even this generous treatment, however, did not satisfy them. Instead of being thankful that they had not been executed or banished as traitors, they at once began an agitation against Juárez because he was so severe. Lerdo, who saw how easily he had been advanced to the position next in prestige to the presidency, gradually drew away from Juárez, whom he had hitherto supported with great loyalty, and began to form, especially among the opposition members in congress, a new party of "Lerdistas."

But it was, as has already been said, the military element which gave most trouble. Foreseeing this, Juárez had, among the first of his official acts after obtaining control, reorganized and reduced the army. Its total strength was placed at twenty thousand men organized into four divisions, commanded respectively after the reorganization by Generals Régules, Porfirio Díaz, Escobedo, and Corona. The discretionary powers hitherto committed to generals as to recruiting and campaigning were now withdrawn, and all were put under the immediate orders of the president as commander in chief. This wholesale reduction of the army of course left many generals and colonels without a command. Besides, the men who, scattered through all sections of the country and largely independent of one another, had with most admirable harmony presented a united front to the foreign invader were unable now to agree among themselves, the pressure from without having been withdrawn.

Juárez was not himself a soldier. But he was a

man of extraordinary personal valor. Time and again he saw not merely his government imperiled and all that he held dear in danger of annihilation, but his own life even hanging in the balance. It was impossible to break in upon his personal serenity. His calmness and decision in the most critical and urgent situations bound to him in an extraordinary way the military leaders upon whom he was forced to lean for support; and the common soldiers, and even the civilians, who were once and again called upon to protect him from personal violence, never hesitated to do so, though it was often at the price of their own lives.

From 1868 to 1872 the uproar was continuous. Regiments, brigades, isolated squads, as the case might be, put forward the claims of some favorite leader who had "proclaimed" against the government and had, one after the other, to be met and defeated. Whole states declared against certain acts of the federal congress or of the executive and had to be coaxed or cudgeled into adhesion. In the congress itself, the conservatives, shifting to this new field the opposition which had so long tried in vain the arbitrament of arms, kept a clamorous minority hanging upon the skirts of the president and clogging as far as it could every advance step.

But Juárez was used to turmoil. To the noisy opposition in congress and to every new insurgent in arms he presented the same calm, imperturbable front. Alert, ready, puissant, he handled troops, directed campaigns, watched the clericals, kept peace

in his cabinet, showing himself by every token the man of destiny.

The election of 1871 came on. A feeling was general that Juárez ought to give place to some other. To this he would not agree. Whether he was the victim of an old man's jealous ambition, or honestly thought it was unsafe for the country to risk a change at that time, will never be known. His friends took one view, his enemies another. Even his friends admit that this was the greatest mistake of his life. Both Lerdo and Díaz received a heavy vote for the presidency, but Juárez was elected. Lerdo, still at the head of the supreme court, took occasion of the general discontent to increase his party in congress, even holding out a friendly hand to the embittered conservatives. General Díaz, who some time before had resigned his place in the army and retired to private life, vexed at this continuance in power of a chief who seemed indisposed to give way to other ambitious and able men, issued his *Plan de la Noria*. In this he proposed to set aside the government and the constitution and call a general assembly to reorganize the whole basis of civil government. The document does him no great credit, nor did the rather guerilla-like campaign in which he with a few followers supported it.

The fiercest of all the outbursts, however, and one that for a moment threatened the most serious consequences, took place in Mexico City. October 1, 1871, just a month after the election of the president for another term, but before his inauguration,

like a bolt from the clear sky broke forth the insurrection of the garrison at the capital. The regiment having charge of the police headquarters murdered their colonel and released all the prisoners. In the principal barracks near by, the whole force was involved. Had a really able leader been found, the result might have been disastrous. But before night Juárez had the revolutionists besieged in the barracks where the disturbance began, which that night were stormed by his faithful and valiant general, Rocha, and the movement was crushed. A number of the leaders, and not a few of the soldiers, were summarily condemned by court-martial and shot. This action produced an exciting episode in congress when Zamacona, the most active of the supporters of Díaz—who were beginning to call themselves “Porfiristas”—bitterly criticised the government, for which the able patriot-poet, Guillermo Prieto, had the unenviable task of being spokesman.

With his usual vigor and success Juárez set himself the winter and spring succeeding to bring order out of what had threatened to become chaos and by the summer of 1872 was again firmly intrenched in his position as constitutional president. His courage and coolness, as well as his respect for law and order, may be seen in the fact that he made no effort to displace Lerdo, though aware that he was constantly intriguing with the enemies of the government. July 18, 1872, Juárez died, somewhat suddenly and from a disease of the heart. To such characterization of him as may be gathered from the preceding pages it will perhaps be well to add here



the brief estimate left by his friend and associate, José María Iglesias, himself an able and incorruptible patriot: "Although Don Benito Juárez was a man of exceptional capacity and not wanting in intellectual training, it may be said that neither his native intelligence nor his learning was of the first rank. His real merit—which may justly be declared exceptional—is to be traced to his extraordinary traits of character. His firmness in matters of principle was immovable. To his principles he held at any cost of effort or sacrifice. Adversity could not vanquish, prosperity could not spoil him. So extraordinary was his passive personal courage that to many it seemed mere insensibility. So honest did he prove himself to be that every opportunity of personal enrichment offered by his long career was carelessly put aside. If it is to be admitted that he clung a little too persistently to his place of power, it is also to be added that he was ever governed by patriotic motives."

Lerdo, by virtue of his position as president of the supreme court and in conformity to the constitution, assumed the presidential office. As soon as congress assembled in the autumn he was confirmed therein, virtually without opposition. During his term *ad interim* he had published a proclamation of amnesty for the imperialists, removing most of the disabilities under which Juárez had resolutely kept them, but not yet granting all that they demanded. The partisans of Díaz were quiescent for the time being, since they had been acting with the Lerdistas against the party of Juárez and were not ready at

a moment's notice to break the friendly bonds thus formed.

Lerdo, a sprightly, eloquent, handsome, and able man, had a comparatively quiet term. Only one serious military episode disturbed the country's peace. Don Manuel Lozada, an ignorant but able Indian of the territory of Tepic, who had favored the intervention and been lauded by Maximilian and the French emperor, kept still in his mountain fastness, a sort of Cave of Adullam, where his renegade force was constantly recruited. General Ramón Corona, in command at Guadalajara, had long since begged to be allowed to crush this nest of traitors, but the government refused. Early in 1873 they swept down upon him at a time when his forces had been greatly depleted, and only by the most heroic fighting at a disadvantage in numbers of four to one did he defeat and scatter these dreaded banditti. He was thereafter rightly looked upon as the savior of Guadalajara, the devastation of which city would inevitably have followed his defeat.

In civil matters the most significant event of the term of Lerdo was the act of September 25, 1874, finally approved and promulgated in December of that year, elevating to the rank of organic constitutional law the *Leyes de Reforma*, especially those proclaiming the separation between Church and state, the liberty of worship, that matrimony is a civil contract, that churches cannot hold real estate, that the religious oath in courts shall be substituted by a protest or promise to speak the truth, and that convents and monasteries are illegal. This set the

final seal upon the confiscation of the ecclesiastical property, a step which even Maximilian, with all his devotion to the Church, had approved by not abrogating the contracts for the sale of this property made under the original law of Juárez.

One term was not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of Lerdo, and though, when the case of Juárez was under consideration, he had opposed the practice of allowing a president to be reëlected at the end of his period in office, he now, as his own quadrennium drew to a close, began to seek to secure the place for himself during another. He was ambitious, not over-scrupulous, and especially averse to taking advice. His election was forced through by the open use of federal power and duly proclaimed by congress, October 26, 1876. The storm then burst, and with tremendous violence.

## CHAPTER VI

### DÍAZ AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

THE story of how Porfirio Díaz came to the presidency may be briefly told. In the election of 1876, as we have just seen, President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada forced his own reëlection as President. Judge José María Iglesias, an honest and high-minded man, was reëlected chief justice of the supreme court. Without having before taken sides openly between the Lerdistas and the Porfiristas, though supposedly favorable to the president, under whom he had just served three years, Iglesias was so outraged by the manner in which Lerdo had forced his own retention in power that he declared the election fraudulent. Retiring to Salamanca, in the wealthy state of Guanajuato, whose governor favored him, he proclaimed himself to be, under the constitution, the legitimate president, and proceeded to organize his cabinet.

More ominous still was the revolutionary movement which had broken out early in the year under General Hernández, so soon in fact as Lerdo had announced his intention of again becoming a candidate for the presidency. This pronunciamiento against him is known as the Plan of Tuxtepec. General Díaz later took it up and with certain modifications made it his own. He was at the time the ablest and most popular military leader in the coun-

try. The collisions between his forces and those of the Lerdist party were frequent and bloody. He was rapidly gaining on the president, who was not himself a soldier, when the defection of Iglesias cut the ground completely from under Lerdo. Vexed at Iglesias, and despairing of holding his own against Díaz, Lerdo quietly slipped out of Mexico by night, leaving the capital in possession of the Porfiristas, who had just gained a decisive victory over the government troops. The exiled president took refuge in New York, where he remained till his death, some fourteen years later.

Díaz promptly moved against Iglesias, but the latter, though stubborn in his opinion that he was the legally constituted president, had not sufficient troops to undertake a campaign. He, therefore—after a personal interview with General Díaz, as some insist—quietly withdrew to the Pacific coast and took ship for San Francisco.

The field was now clear. General Díaz ordered an election for president, as both president and chief justice were gone, and was himself elected without opposition, taking charge of the government May 5, 1877, for the presidential term to end November 30, 1880. Succeeded when that time came by General Manuel González, he was again elected in 1884.

The principle of “no reëlection,” to which he had himself adhered in his campaign against Lerdo, was held to mean that a president should not immediately succeed himself. President González had stirred things up not a little during his term, and the



nation was glad to have again at the helm the strong hand of Don Porfirio. His administration during the term 1884 to 1888 gave universal satisfaction. Banditry was put down, railways and telegraph lines were opened up, foreign capital began to flow into the country, and an air of prosperity and peace pervaded the whole land. There was no serious objection, therefore, to the action of the Federal Congress when toward the end of that term it abolished the no-reëlection provision of the electoral law and opened the way to the continuance of Díaz in office.

The success that attended his early administration was due in part to the man himself and in part to circumstances. One of the most essential of these has already been discussed. When the Church and its orders were deprived of their wealth, one of the most fruitful sources of armed rebellions was dried up. Without the work of Juárez that of Díaz would have been impossible. The principles of the constitution, after the way for them was cleared by the *Leyes de Reforma*, proved a solid foundation for a peaceful administration.

To this favoring circumstance are to be added a few others. One of these was that the people were exceedingly weary of war. It had devastated the country, demoralized society, annihilated commerce, choked agriculture, made uncertain the tenure of life and property, and sent to a bloody grave the flower of the nation's youth. The common people, caring little for the elective franchise and knowing nothing of governmental questions, were at last

willing that anybody who wished should be president so long as they were left in peace.

Again, and this means more than would appear, the military competitors of Díaz were nearly all older than he. They rapidly died off. The probability of a successful revolution against a general of his experience and tried skill thus soon became remote. Not many were foolish enough to try the experiment.

Finally—though for this the president himself was largely responsible—the advent of the railways during the early eighties made it possible for the government to handle its troops with a speed and efficiency which, a thing never before possible, nipped revolutions in the bud.

Turning from external and largely adventitious conditions to the man, we find in President Díaz himself the best explanation at once of his success and of the measures by which he insured it. First of all, he was a popular hero. A native (born September 15, 1830) of the patriotic state of Oaxaca, which gave to the republic both Juárez and Díaz, the persecution of the jealous and ever-suspicious Santa Ana turned him from his chosen pursuit of the law into a soldier's life while he was yet a young man (1853). From then till the end of the French intervention his career was one of adventure. Active, athletic, a horseman, a swimmer, a rifle shot, his was a figure to capture the imagination.

Such in his young manhood was the leader who for thirty-five eventful years was to dominate the destinies of his country. To the last he remained the

bluff, hard-handed old soldier. For many years the aging men who had served with and under him had free access to the presidential offices. He knew them by name and talked with them familiarly as *tu*, the intimate form of address which in Spanish is reserved for the family and the friends of long standing. He was not a highly educated man, and his mental processes were direct and simple. And, despite appearances to the contrary in the later years, his sympathies were with the common people. Few men in the history of Mexico have understood better than he the Mexican type of character, and so long as he was able personally to be the main factor in his government the measures put into operation aroused a minimum of popular dissatisfaction and antagonism. But long before he was actually overthrown the immense development of the country, in economic matters especially, put the administration of its affairs quite beyond his personal direction. It used to be said jokingly by those concerned in these developments, in the building of railways, the administration of banking, the organization of great corporations, that Don Porfirio, as he was affectionately called, could never really grasp a calculation that went beyond one hundred thousand dollars. That sum was the ultimate range of his financial imagination. It should be said in his honor, moreover, that while he was an ambitious man, delighting in power and tenacious of his hold upon it, he was not cursed by a spirit of avarice. With a thousand opportunities of enriching himself, he came to the end of his life a comparatively poor man.

At the beginning of his administration two urgent requirements of his country's welfare presented themselves to his direct and rather unsophisticated vision, the suppression of disorder and the financial rehabilitation of a land potentially rich, but just then desperately poor. To the remedying of these conditions he set himself with whole-hearted energy and concentration.

In the matter of civil order, the reestablishment of peace, he knew his people and he remembered his own behavior well enough to understand that the iron hand of military force was the only possible safeguard. So he applied it ruthlessly. In that realm he was at home, for he was ever the soldier. His government took thus from the beginning the guise of a military despotism, a character that was retained long after it should have been exchanged for the milder forms of civil administration.

At the beginning this was, however, imperative. He had many political enemies. Though most of the experienced military leaders of the war period of the sixties had passed from the stage of action, there were still not a few generals, some who had fought with him, some against him, who saw no reason why they should not have their turn at governing the country. The land was also plagued with roving bandits, squads of ex-soldiers and bands of lawless mountaineers, who preferred pillage to honest labor. If peace was to be conserved, and if he was to be continued in power—and to his mind the two meant the same thing—he must keep his hand on the army and must continue it in a state of efficiency.

As to the personal ambition of Díaz and his attitude of mind, a quaint story was once told me by an American soldier of fortune. This man, Miller by name, was one of a number of young fellows who after our Civil War drifted into Mexico to help drive out the French. He told me, by the way, not a little of the adventures of a battalion of American cavalry to which he had belonged in Mexico, and how they used to sweep everything before them. Later he made his home in Brownsville, Tex., to which place his old friend Díaz came once when in exile after leading an uprising against Juárez. While there he said to Miller, "I intend to be President of Mexico some day, if I have to ride in blood up to my horse's bridle." Years later, as President, he came to Brownsville for the opening of the international bridge. Miller was standing in a group on the sidewalk as the presidential cavalcade rode by, and the sharp eye of the old soldier recognized him. In a low voice and with a wink he said, "*¿No te dije, Meeler?*" "What did I tell you, Miller?" This ability to know and to keep in touch with his old comrades in arms was for long one of the valued assets of the picturesque Mexican president.

Though Díaz in those earlier years had an iron hand, he well knew how to incase it in velvet. To potential rivals he assigned posts of honor somewhat remotely connected with the government. Many were sent as ministers to foreign powers. Others were made governors of states, though that was a position which they held at their peril. At the first sign that they were supplying themselves unduly



either with funds or with soldiers—state militia—or were organizing a political clique not completely under the control of the Federal capital, down came the hard hand of the President. More than one was quietly exiled, and two or three gallant generals were assassinated, under circumstances not altogether to the President's credit.

With those who were civilian politicians and not soldiers he readily compromised, usually succeeding in attaching them to himself. The Hon. Romero Rubio, for example, had been an ardent Lerdist. But the President, having been widowed, married the beautiful Carmen, daughter of Don Romero, who thereafter became a minister in his cabinet and a loyal friend.

In dealing with the bandits, Díaz showed himself characteristically shrewd. Many of the leaders among these freebooters were known to him. In the days when he had himself, from time to time, been engaged in guerilla warfare, he had had personal contact with these hardy outlaws. He hit upon the plan of organizing a body of Federal mounted police, rural guards he called them, for patrolling the countryside and suppressing disorder. This body he then made up largely of the bandits themselves.

He used to call in one of these head bandits for an interview, pledging him that he would not be arrested or interfered with. In the presidential office the bandit would be astonished by being met by a hearty greeting, the great man embracing and calling him by name. After inquiries about the

family and crops, the President would unfold his plan of rural guards. "There is not much in this robbery business, is there, old fellow?" he would say. "The people are poor. Most of your hold-ups don't yield anything. The police keep you on the jump. You don't like the life anyhow. I will undertake to pay you more in wages than you can get robbing and furnish you besides a horse and a uniform. What do you say?" It is easy to guess what the answer usually was.

These rurales, dressed not as soldiers, but as ranchmen, with wide hats and gray jackets, proved to be both loyal to the government—that is, to the President—and surprisingly efficient. The country is thinly settled. The squad of rurales in a county seat would have personal knowledge of every man in the county. If a crime was committed in any particular neighborhood, they had an uncanny way of fastening suspicion on the guilty one. Once the system had perfected its organization and began to operate, it was rare that an arrest followed later than forty-eight hours after the crime. And usually there was no mistake as to the criminal. As the organization covered the whole republic and was soon connected up by means of a net work of telegraph lines, there was something fateful and awe-inspiring in the way the rurales always got their man.

This was naturally a great deterrent to crime. It was soon reënforced by the adoption of certain characteristic methods. The courts were not yet very efficiently organized, especially in the thinly settled regions. It involved a good deal of trouble

and expense to bring a man to trial, and often then the punishment would only be a short term in the penitentiary. He would soon be back at his old tricks. Some of these men were hardy and desperate characters. Many resented arrest and took the first chance at breaking away. In such cases, if the crime had been a serious one, the carbines and pistols of the rurales came into play, and the career of that criminal came to a sudden end. This manner of disposing of the hard cases was soon seen to be far more efficient and inexpensive than trial before a court. The officers of the rurales probably began the business, hinting to the corporal of the guard which had to convey a criminal across the country to the county seat that it would be pleasing to everybody and no questions asked if the prisoner never arrived. Report could be made that he had tried to get away. Thus was originated the *ley fuga*, about as famous now in Mexico as is "lynch law" in our country.

As applied to known and hardened criminals this practice was not without merit. It rapidly thinned out the bolder spirits among them and in a few years made the remotest countryside in Mexico absolutely safe. Along the mountain trails might be seen at intervals the little wooden crosses which marked the spots where men who dared the vengeance of the rurales had met their end. These signposts of the long reach of the hand in Mexico City were an effective warning. But when the *ley fuga* was made the means, as often it came to be in the hands of petty local officials, of disposing of political opponents or of personal rivals of any sort, nothing

could have been more dastardly. Many a man has set out under guard to pass from one place to another, well knowing that the next day his friends would find his body somewhere along the way, with a bullet in the back of his head. Victoriano Huerta, as late as 1913, was stupid enough to descend to this subterfuge when he had Francisco Madero murdered.

The financial rehabilitation of Mexico under Díaz awaited perforce the "pacification" of the country, both as to rebellion against the government and consequent disorder and as to banditry and other outrages upon life and property. Having accomplished both these swiftly and effectively, President Díaz was in position to turn to the major task. Again the problem was to his mind a perfectly simple one. The country's enormous resources had never been developed. It was thinly settled, and what wealth had been extracted from it had remained in the hands of a few families and of the Catholic Church. The Church had been despoiled of much of its goods, though the financial returns to the government therefrom had been relatively meager. The wealthy families were conservative in politics, and Díaz was a liberal. Many would not coöperate with his government. Nothing was left, then, but to turn to foreign capital. This, without hesitation, the President did.

Feeling first the need of better communications, both as an element of stability for his government and to put his people into touch with the markets of the world, he gave his attention to the railways. Within less than a decade after he came into power

two lines connected his capital with the United States, in addition to the one other outlet already in existence, to the ocean by way of Vera Cruz. And with liberal subsidies, temporary exemption from taxation, and other favors, he encouraged the foreign builders of railroads—chiefly American, though much of the capital was drawn from Europe—to go on building, until branch lines had opened up nearly all the rich sections of the republic and formed a network over which his disciplined troops could be swiftly transported to any seat of incipient trouble. Even with the heavy subsidies for construction and favors in operating, these railways did not prove to be a very profitable investment. The country had not been long enough quiet to have its agriculture and its industries sufficiently developed to supply heavy traffic. But the railroads were a vast improvement, nevertheless. They pleased the people and made a favorable impression abroad, becoming one of the most effective of agencies for civilizing and modernizing the national life. Many of the men engaged in their building and operation made comfortable fortunes for themselves and became stanch supporters of the Díaz government, even though stockholders got but scanty dividends and the roads as investments had a rather fictitious value.

The mining industry and in some degree manufacturing were given a strong impulsion. Investments of this kind were also liberally treated by the Díaz government. Some years later came the discovery and exploitation of the oil fields, which proved to be phenomenally rich and extensive. The coun-



try was peaceful. Insurrection had completely disappeared, banditry was rare and sporadic. Foreigners, especially citizens of the United States, flocked into Mexico and were scattered from end to end over the whole land, in rural sections as well as in the centers. The English language could be heard everywhere. Every variety of natural resources was tapped—mining, lumbering, coffee culture, rubber, oil, farming, stock-raising—individuals, corporations, colonies busying themselves with them all. It was a land of dreams and of unimagined possibilities.

Naturally the business of the government enormously increased, and with the years the soldier president grew old. Civilian administration perforce became more and more the affair of his ministers and of their underlings in the Federal and state governments. Central control was still of the military type. Elections were nothing but a name. The President appointed the state governors and dominated the choice of congressmen and senators. The governors held their places by military force, largely exerted through the corps of rurales. County government was dominated by appointees of the governor—more strictly of the President through the governor—called *jefes políticos*, nominally civilian officials, but in reality irresponsible dictators. Even the municipalities, whose autonomy and liberty was a tradition that had come down through colonial days from the remote period of the Roman Empire, lost about all semblance of their freedom and were made an integral part of the central administration.

That administration had neglected until it was fatally too late to bring about, along with the material regeneration of the country, the educational and economic relief of its submerged population. This, it may well be believed, was rather by oversight than by intention. Díaz, while in many ways a great man, was not sufficiently versatile as a ruler to see the chasm into which he was precipitating his people. His single-minded effort to restore order and develop natural resources occupied his thought so long that when he tried to turn to these other demands of the situation the whole business had got out of hand. Of the financial development, especially, he had made a sort of Frankenstein. It ground down his people and ultimately himself till disaster overtook him.

The process was simple enough. Permits for development, with or without subsidies and other special privileges, had to be issued by the Federal authorities. There is nothing essentially sinister, as has often been suspected, about these *concesiones*. (Even so careful a student of government as President Wilson was misled.) The word has not the same implication in Spanish that it carries in English. It simply means permit, not necessarily a special or protected grant. The more important of these concessions came to be applied for by corporations. The issuance of them was in the hands of the several departments of state. Nothing was more natural, therefore, than that the officials of these departments should receive blocks of stock, membership, and even office in the corporation it-

self, and other advantages, partly because they were shrewd enough to invest and partly because the managers of the organizations were willing to make such investments easy for them. Such participation was not necessarily or always dishonest, of course, nor was it unfortunately always strictly honorable.

Thus the soulless corporation came to dominate the wealth of Mexico, just as in an earlier day that wealth had been in the hands of the feudal landholders and the purse-proud ecclesiasties. The common people had only changed masters, they had not secured their freedom. Wages were better, to be sure. The workers had shared in some degree in the fruits of their country's prosperity. But their economic and social status was still deplorable.

Inevitably this new financial control was accompanied by many abuses. Boundaries of real estate had long been ill defined. The old royal grants were often vague. Disputes over lines had been handed down for generations. It seemed wise to clear the matter up. So an innocent-looking law was passed providing for a survey by competent engineers in the employ of the Federal government. It allowed a certain period in which claims might be filed, so that when the lines were officially drawn all parties in interest might receive due consideration. These new lines, once they were drawn and registered, were to be determinative and final. People owning real estate, or desiring to purchase, welcomed the law. Now they might count on clear titles.

But it was abuses of this law, good enough in it-

self, that led to the overthrow of the Díaz government. The Indians and the rural population generally knew nothing of the law. They and their forefathers had held certain lands for generations. Many of them were communal lands, long since assigned by the Spanish government to the villages and towns. But adjacent to these communes there were to be found large haciendas. The owners of these, putting them up for sale, would claim lines of demarcation which invaded the communal lands of the Indians. These, knowing nothing of filing their claims, would be surprised some day to see a surveyor running lines through what they were sure were their lands, and not only surprised but horrified a little later when fences went up or soldiers ejected them from the fields and woodlands of their ancestors. In connection with such episodes there was, of course, much bribery of surveyors, much unworthy collusion between buyer and seller, both of them utterly callous to the claims of the Indians. This abuse was conspicuous in connection with lumbering concessions.

Along with this decree for the clearing of titles was another which proved even more disastrous. The President decided that the time had come to do away with the village communal lands—*ejidos* they were called (from the Latin *exitus*). The village commune was in existence among the Indians when the country was colonized. The Spanish government wisely recognized and continued the system, and when land grants were made the *ejidos* of the Indian villages were duly recognized

and recorded. For a single village it was usually a square league (nine square miles). If the community was a large one, it might be twice or four times that. Special grants were made also of wooded mountains, for fuel, lumber, and grazing. The government of Díaz decided that the time had come when the communistic system should be broken up and the Indians taught to own their lands in severalty. The United States government has faced the same problem in connection with tribal grants to the Indians in various reservations.

Enemies of Díaz charge that his real purpose was to take the lands from the Indians, knowing that they would not understand how to avail themselves of the new regulations. However that may have been, the fact is that thousands of acres of these lands passed into the hands of the rich *hacendados* and of lumbering and other corporations. The number of large haciendas was greatly increased during the Díaz administration, for the benefit of the President's friends, it is alleged, and millions of the Indian laborers were forced to change their status from the relative freedom of the village commune to the serfdom of peons on these great haciendas. Good authorities estimate the lands, most of them agricultural and rich, thus alienated during the Díaz administration at not less than one hundred and thirty-five million acres. This meant a change in the status of something like ten million of Mexico's humble farming population.

The educational problem was one with which Díaz was peculiarly unfitted to deal. Personally he set



no great store by education. For centuries the country had been a land of illiterates. The few tentative endeavors of the early Spanish missionaries to teach the Indians had long since been forgotten. In the cities and larger towns there were a few schools. From time to time during the century of independence great leaders had urged that a republic cannot endure except as it rests upon an intelligent citizenship. States and municipalities had also and sporadically made awkward stabs at a situation which all deplored. When independence, political independence, that is, was obtained, it is probable that not more than one-half of one per cent of Mexico's population could read and write. That population was now no longer one made up merely of "whites" and Indians. By the time of Díaz it had been shaken down into a fairly homogeneous mass, in which "whites," mixed bloods, and Indians were shuffled together till nobody knew or cared just where the lines were. Those existing were no longer lines of race, but of economic conditions, of intelligence and privilege. The ninety-nine and a half per cent of illiteracy of colonial days had been cut down to perhaps eighty per cent. The swift economic development—railways, telegraph, factories, travel, contact with foreigners—had been itself a sort of education. It had especially served to bring home to the illiterate the meaning and the weight of the handicap of ignorance. So there was a clamor for education which the feeble efforts of poor municipalities and the scattering institutions of Protestant missions could do little to quiet.

At last the Federal Government took hold of the matter. Up to that time, following in this regard as in so many others the example of the United States, public education had been left to the states, counties, and municipalities. In some of the states and in some of the cities, more especially in the state capitals, there had been considerable advances. The problem everywhere was twofold—money and teachers. Schools were housed in all kinds of undesirable quarters. Methods of teaching were antiquated. Current systems of taxation yielded but miserable sums for educational purposes. There were only beginnings of normal training for teachers, and the promising young men and women who might engage in teaching were of families so poor that not only could they not defray the expenses of the training of these young people; they could only at a sacrifice be deprived of their labor in the exigent business of getting a living.

The problem was thus a vast and complicated one. Since the Federal government absorbed the bulk of the income from taxation, it was clearly its duty to contribute freely to the work of educating the people. But it too had many other uses for its money, and the question of just how to collaborate with the local efforts was not easy to solve. A Federal Department of Education was established, and earnest and able men set themselves to the task of reducing the illiteracy of a whole people. Since the Díaz administration came to an end it has been the fashion to echo the charges of the enemies of Mexico, who insist that it did nothing at all toward educating

the Mexican people. This is to disregard the plain facts of history and to discount the labors of certain great educational leaders who in their time strove as earnestly as any who have followed them, and that in the face of enormous difficulties, to discharge this primary obligation of a modern government. It is not, however, within the purview of this book to enter upon a documented and exact account of what the Díaz government did and tried to do for education.

After all, its effort came too late. The unwieldy corporations were settling down upon Mexico, perpetuating the evils of the centuries which had seen the rich landowners and the haughty hierarchy grind beneath their heels a mass of helpless and ignorant peasantry. Indeed, Mexico's struggle for the *independencia* which her people hold so dear has from the first been a threefold one. It was not enough to secure political independence from Spain. Two other rulers were yet to be reckoned with, the Church and the rich. The bloody victories of Juárez seemed to be the final word as to the Church, but even as late as 1926, sixty years afterward, the struggle was renewed. The economic problem is also still up for solution, and Mexico, despite her new and liberal constitution, has yet far to go.

In this realm a somewhat futile onslaught was made by Díaz on the system of peonage. This practice described earlier in our discussion (Chapter II) was a relic of the days when Indians had been conveyed (*encomendados*) along with the land in order that they might be Christianized. It merely resulted in their being riveted down as serfs of the

glebe. They had to work for the owner of the land, under penalties such as he chose to apply, since they could not leave the hacienda as long as they were in debt to it. As they had access to no stores or markets except that belonging to their master, it was a simple matter for him to keep any valued workman in debt. About 1896 a law was passed which attempted to regulate these practices. Among other things it forbade the payment of wages in scrip redeemable only at the hacienda store. There were other liberalizing provisions, but this was about the only one that ever went into force. The land owners showed the same skill in evading the law which their forefathers had exhibited in setting at naught the benevolent regulations concerning the Indians issued by the Royal Council.

As the years passed Díaz gathered about him a group of able ministers. They undertook to place the government on what they called a scientific basis. So much was said about this that they came to be called the "*científicos*." They were not a political party, but, if anything, rather a sort of cabal. Their leader was Sr. José Ives Limantour, Minister of Finance. He proved himself an able financier. The railways of the country were under his hand consolidated (most of them) into one system, and the government took control by buying fifty-one per cent of the stock. The other stockholders were doubtless rather glad to have the government as a partner and in position to bear the major responsibility. The money of the country was placed on a gold basis (at thirty-two to one for

the silver coinage). Banking was stabilized. The credit of the government was firmly established and its president-ruler was extravagantly admired, especially abroad. His achievements were glowingly pictured by not a few foreign writers, and he saw to it that such admirers were well paid for their flattering portraiture of him.

The year 1910 marked the centenary of the independence movement, the *grito de Dolores*, Hidalgo's "Cry" for liberty. It was also the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Díaz, which took place, as it chanced on the eve of Independence Day, September 16. The stage was set for an elaborate celebration of the occasion. The old gentleman was still active, but long since his entourage had been shielding him from the more rigorous details of administration. Indeed, it was generally understood that many things were done for him and in his name concerning which he personally had no information. He kept a jealous hand, however, on matters of government, especially in relation to a possible successor to himself. Some time before he had rather reluctantly yielded to the plan of having a vice president chosen along with himself every four years, but he never yielded the right to determine for himself who this associate in office, at best little more than a figurehead, should be.

The celebration of the centenary took place as per schedule. Enormous sums of money were expended in hospitality. Visitors, official and other, were present from all over the world. The occasion was one of splendor and beauty. It gave these foreign



observers the impression of a firmly seated, semi-imperial government, which might be expected long to weather any storms that might blow upon it. But that very year of 1910 marked the beginning of a disintegration so swift and so complete as to leave the whole world stunned. To the elements of decay that were at work within, and to the influences which contributed to bringing them to an early and tragic culmination, we must now turn.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MADERO REVOLUTION

EVENTS that have followed the dissolution of the Díaz *régime* tend to establish the conclusion that in their final analysis Mexico's troubles have been economic rather than predominantly political. The misuse of public funds by public officials, a depleted treasury, and outrageous tax burdens have more often caused the downfall of governments and leaders than has their holding to or rejection of this or that theory of administration—republican or monarchical, federal or centralist. As has already been observed, the Mexican people in their attempt to establish themselves in independence and autonomy have had to deal with three principal barriers—Spain, the Church, and wealth. The Church, which had long since been thought put in its place by the Juárez constitution, has lately (1926) risen again, once more to challenge the civil power. This was a menace of which those who rose up against Díaz were not unaware. A pronounced liberal at first, and understanding well that the struggle in which he took part during the sixties was not so much against Napoleon III in France as against clericalism in Mexico, in his later years Don Porfirio rested too securely on the victories long before won. He became neglectful of the Reform Laws and apparently indifferent to danger in that quarter.

His young wife was an ardent Catholic. She gave open patronage and support to the leaders of the hierarchy. They were encouraged to get back as much of their former wealth and influence as they could without so flagrantly infringing the *Leyes de Reforma* that the matter could not be overlooked. Even the religious orders began to reappear, and Jesuit colleges as well as various kinds of convents for nuns were quietly reestablished, the minor civil authorities winking at the abuse, since no suggestion to the contrary came to them from "higher up."

It was chiefly in the economic realm, however, that the gathering storm was incubated. The presidential coterie, calling themselves the "*científicos*," were not popular. They were nearly all rich men and rapidly growing richer. Meantime the lot of the poor man improved slowly, as it seemed to him not at all. He was especially resentful that so little should be done for the education of his children. His housing was bad. Conditions of labor were deplorable. His food was coarse and often insufficient. His thin clothing was the badge of his poverty. He lived from hand to mouth. He could see no difference between having for masters the manufacturing corporations, the mining companies, the henequen and tobacco plantations, controlled by the friends of the government and their foreign associates, and the old days when favorites of the Spanish king and powerful ecclesiastics dominated the agricultural and industrial life of his country. The name *científico* became with him a term of reproach. The only thing

“scientific” which he could discover about the administration was its skill in robbing and oppressing the poor.

The fact that it was chiefly foreign money which had brought about the country's seeming poverty, and that foreign corporations, or those domestic organizations which foreigners dominated, were rapidly coming into control of the country's natural resources, became increasingly ominous. That was an important count in the popular indictment of the *científicos*; they had sold their country to foreigners. On every side were evidences of this. The railroads belonged to the Americans and the English. The richest mines had been bought by outsiders. A great chain of smelters and refiners, American owned, belted the mining states. Huge lumber concerns were denuding the pine-clad mountains and invading the lowlands in search of mahogany, ebony, and other precious trees. Rubber, coffee, cattle, sugar, vanilla, fibers, hides—there was nothing in the way of products that these eager investors from abroad did not have their hands on. The climax of it all came with the development of Mexico's oil. This was accomplished almost wholly by foreigners. Mexican capital was too slow, too conservative. Many individual Mexicans, to be sure, and a few Mexican companies, shared in this rich harvest. But oil wells, pipe lines, refineries, tank steamers are expensive. The initial investments had to be heavy. Only the powerful American and British companies could lift the load, could bring the development to a paying basis.

The men who led in this bold adventure, taking risks which nobody could then compute and investing in advance huge sums of money brought from abroad, sometimes complain that the Mexicans show so little appreciation of the part which they played in bringing into existence an industry from which Mexico as well as they has greatly profited. But the mood of the Mexicans is easy to comprehend. They saw a great endowment which had been bestowed by nature upon their country going almost wholly into hands that were not Mexican. That was the one outstanding, indisputable fact. They took alarm, and to this day the matter remains with them a burning question.

With all this, it was, as had so often happened before, a political issue which set off the train for the great explosion. For his own people Díaz had ceased to be the romantic figure of other years. It was familiarly known that many things were done in his name, some of them even behind his back, with which he had personally nothing to do. He was getting to be a tool, a figurehead. And in so far as he actually took a hand in affairs he was coming to display the familiar weaknesses of the autocratic ruler who grows old in power. His jealousy became overweening. Suspicion of others gnawed at him continually. In confidential moods he would laugh to scorn the romantic pictures of himself and of his sentiments sent off by visiting correspondents, most of whom, however, he saw to it were well paid. Naturally, he had long since given up, either in theory or practice, any adherence to democratic



ideals. Of the "democracy" attributed to him in a famous "interview" (by James Creelman) he is said to have remarked caustically, "As if I had a single gram of it in my composition!"

There was thus a considerable public which was ready to welcome an onslaught upon the Díaz monopoly of power. This public was not primarily interested in political matters. There were, naturally, a few men here and there who resented the fact that there could be no political preferment, even locally in their own cities and states, except for those who were abjectly subservient to the President. They were even convinced that he demanded not only loyalty, but also mediocrity. Talent, that might conceivably develop into rivalry, was not welcomed by the aging tyrant. From time to time as presidential elections came along—the term had now been extended to six years—Díaz gave utterance to vague platitudes to the effect that he was subject to the will of the people, was growing old, and might even welcome relief from the burdens of government. But it was well understood that he was, nevertheless, keeping a firm grip on the reins and seeing to it that his words were not taken seriously in any quarter which might prove embarrassing.

At this stage emerges on the scene a figure destined to go down in history as one of the most tragic in all of Mexico's highly colored and swiftly shifting story, that of Francisco I. Madero. The Madero family was old, large, rich, and influential. They were of the landed gentry, the *hacendados*, of the

northern part of the Mexican plateau. In the state of Coahuila, of which he was at one time governor, Don Evaristo Madero, grandfather of the revolutionary leader, was owner of an hacienda of nearly two millions of acres. Francisco I., by some queer turn of inheritance, did not partake of the *hacendado* psychology. From his youth he was a visionary, a democrat, a dreamer. Educated in the United States, he returned to the ancestral home in Coahuila only to have his theories and his studies mildly ridiculed and himself rather set at naught. He was of a cheerful and amiable temperament, however, and in due time married a beautiful and spirited young woman, Señorita Sara Pérez.

In the year 1908 appeared the Creelman interview to which reference has been made. In it Díaz was made to say that, as he would be eighty years old at the expiration of his term of office in 1910, he had decided not again to be a candidate for the presidency. If he put out this statement merely as a means of arousing his supporters to a more intense loyalty, it was measurably successful. A general chorus of adulation arose, in which his achievements and his value to the country, even though he was no longer so active as formerly, were dwelt upon most earnestly. But, as he should himself have known, for a man seventy-eight years old, who really wished and intended to hold on to his place of power, to utter sentiments of this kind was to play with fire, and that in a powder magazine. Almost immediately disaffected individuals and groups in the very innermost circles of the presidential supporters—for

there was no love lost between the President and some of the leading *científicos*—began to cast about for ways to assure their share of the power that was soon to be yielded up and their place—if they could get one—in the future government of the country.

The details of the plots and counter-plots, of intrigue and maneuvering, of jealousies and hatreds, which began to seethe about the aging ruler need not be recounted here. Provision for a vice president had been made in 1904. That seemed the normal place for some able man, who should thus become an understudy for Don Porfirio, sharing his burdens and getting ready to take his place. But that was not at all the type of man he wanted associated with him. He was minded to take no chance of a possible rival. So he had practically forced the election of one Ramón Corral. As military governor of the State of Sonora under the direction of Díaz, this man had put down an uprising of the spirited Yaqui Indians with excessive barbarity, transporting many of them in chains to Yucatán to become peon prisoners on the henequen plantations. He was a man of uncommonly dissolute personal habits, so gross indeed that he could not command the respect even of the notoriously lax society of the capital.

Madero, having theorized extensively concerning liberty and democracy, suddenly began to make his doctrines concrete. In 1908 he published a book called "The Presidential Succession of 1910." In this, though exhibiting at least ostensible loyalty to the President, and lauding him freely for his past achievements, he openly and frankly questioned the

advisability of his taking office for another term. Even more specific was his attack on the advisability of continuing Corral in office as vice president. This book and the Creelman interview, appearing near the same time, were widely circulated in Mexico. They produced a sensation. Much of the resulting discussion was not at all what the aged dictator—for so he had now become—had hoped for. People were disposed to take seriously his proposal to retire from office. Many went farther and openly said that it was high time. Madero, on his part, chiefly interested in breaking in upon the closed political corporation conducted by Díaz, had branched out from talking of farcical “elections,” a subsidized press, monopolies of offices and other political matters, to have some words to say concerning the distribution of land, labor conditions, wages, treatment of the Indians, and the like—economic matters in which a much wider public was concerned.

Indeed, the group represented by Madero, of well-to-do and educated men, nominally eligible for public office, was small. There was, up to that time, little trace of a middle class. Mexicans were, in their great majority, either rich or poor. Few came in between. To the great mass of the poor, especially to those who remain distinctively Indians, politics means nothing. They are submissive and indifferent. They wish only peace and a little land to till, with as few taxes and as little oppression, whether by landlord or government, as possible.

Following the publication of his book Madero was

led into campaigning. He and others organized a "No-reëlection" party, and he went here and there making speeches in support of it. A short and insignificant looking man, with an ineffective, thin voice, he had about him nevertheless a sort of prophetic and flaming intensity. When he touched upon the land question, especially reprobating the President for robbing the Indian villages of their *ejidos*, his words struck fire. There are those who would have us believe that all this was aside from Madero's real aim; that he was interested in politics only and not in economic reform. Perhaps it is true that he did not at first see all the implications of his agrarian doctrines. He was, in fact, however, attacking in this one of the hoariest and most firmly entrenched of Mexico's many economic abuses. His shafts when he touched upon this subject were directed not merely at the President and his political machine, but at his own family, his father, uncles, and grandfather—himself even—all great landholders. Whether or not he had meant to get into just this position, credit must be given him, once he became involved in it, for courage and persistence. He continued to advocate these views, displeasing though they were to the circles in which he had moved. For, of all that he had to say, it was this sort of thing that most effectively brought to his side the great mass of the Mexican people and at the same time most swiftly consolidated into stern hostility the governing group that had hitherto looked upon him and his campaign with a sort of amused tolerance.



Madero and his associates coupled with their slogan of "no-reëlection" another—namely, "effective suffrage." These words express the conviction of Madero, to which at the beginning he firmly adhered, that the dictatorial system to which Mexico had been and was then subjected could be set aside by the people merely through the peaceful use of their votes as citizens. Three decades of peace had, as he conceived it, given them a horror of civil war, while at the same time training them for the practices of democracy. His plan was to begin with the vice presidency, waiting for the solution of the presidential issue by the operation of nature's laws.

Other groups of citizens, not allied with Madero, were taking a similar course. One of these, made up of prominent political leaders, some directly identified with the Díaz government, organized themselves into a "Democratic Party" to promote the candidacy for the position of Vice President of General Bernardo Reyes. This candidate, a popular figure because of his military standing and history, was soon found to be unacceptable to Díaz. His following had already become a large one, when suddenly he announced that he could not accept and advised his friends to support Corral. It is believed that the fact that he was a general in the army made it possible for such pressure to be brought to bear on him by the government that he was forced against his will to retire from the race. This left his followers without a leader. Instead of taking his advice and falling in with the Díaz program, many of them went over to the Madero party.

Madero was not himself at first a candidate. Many of his associates disagreed with him as to the possibility of a peaceful solution. They were sure that when pressed the President would use force, and that in that emergency force would have to be the reply. They held that the only way to deal with a dictatorship is to sweep it out of existence.

After the formation of numerous "clubs" throughout the country in support of the new party of "effective suffrage: no reëlection," the result of the campaigning of Madero and his associates, along with much discussion of candidates and policies, it was decided to call a national convention. This body met in Mexico City, April 15, 1910. One wing of the "Democratic" party joined in sending delegates. Within two days it adopted a brief but ringing statement of principles and by a vote of 159 out of 185 nominated Francisco I. Madero as its candidate for the presidency. As his running mate the convention selected Dr. Francisco Vázquez Gómez. The platform called for the restoration to its rightful place of the constitution, the insertion of an amendment prohibiting reëlection, the reformation of the electoral laws, the encouragement of public works, and the improvement of conditions of labor, the development of public education, etc. A committee raised for the purpose issued a few days later an address to the nation.

Madero accepted the nomination and began soon his campaign. The uneasiness of Díaz grew day by day, and early in June Madero and Sr. Roque Estrada, who had been secretary of the convention, his

companion in this round of speech-making, were arrested in Monterrey on the charge of sedition. They had made brief railway platform addresses when passing through San Luís Potosí. A spy, the private secretary of Vice President Corral, was on the train and gave out twisted versions of what they supposedly had said. So they were taken to San Luís Potosí and lodged in the state prison. There they were held for about six weeks, during which time the presidential election took place. The election of Díaz and Corral was announced, though according to Mexican law the results were not final till the Federal Congress meeting in September should sit as an electoral college, canvass the ballots, and officially declare the outcome.

Toward the end of July the prisoners were allowed the liberty of the city. The most significant phase of this prison experience was the change effected in Madero's point of view. At last, under pressure from his friends, especially his associate in prison, Lic. Estrada, and moved by the hard logic of facts, Madero decided that armed revolution was the only solution of the situation. He had hoped to avoid such an uprising, but this was proving impossible. Once decided in favor of the move, he began soon to exhibit the impulsiveness, optimism, and lack of practical judgment which were his worst failings. He seemed to have no conception of what it meant to raise and equip an army. Almost at once he and some of his imprudent advisers set an early date for the uprising and were with difficulty re-

strained from a movement so premature that it would inevitably have failed.

Meantime his supporters throughout the republic had been outraged by the high-handed methods employed during the voting. They presented a formal petition to the Congress demanding that the election be declared void and a new one ordered. A rift was opening meantime between Díaz and the "*científicos*," who were using Corral as their tool. So uneasy did all this show of friendship for Madero and these interior troubles render the aged President that it began to be hinted that Madero's life was in danger. So on the advice of friends he slipped away from San Luís Potosí and escaped to the United States (Oct. 6, 7, 1910).

In San Antonio he and his leading advisers got together and began to plan for their insurrection. By this time Madero had practically exhausted his private fortune. How to secure funds for the movement became a problem. Two of his sisters and one brother, Gustavo, were heartily in sympathy with him. Others of his family and the more remote members of the large connection were lukewarm or openly hostile. Gustavo Madero was at the time promoting the building of a short line of railway. He had secured subscriptions for the purpose—mostly in Europe—to the amount of \$375,000. His was a bold and aggressive spirit. He decided to "borrow" this money for the revolution. What he had done was not generally known, and when, some two years later, he got it back from the Madero government, to make restitution to the investors in the railway,

the story was widely circulated that Madero and his family were taking public funds to enrich themselves.

At San Antonio Madero composed his revolutionary manifesto. The document was sent back to Mexico so as to emanate from San Luís Potosí and received the name "*Plan de San Luís Potosí.*" It was dated October 5 and really represented the views which he had come to accept while a prisoner in that city. It recited the high-handed methods used to assure the election of the Díaz ticket in the July election and the failure of the people to get redress from Congress. It declared that the country had fallen into the power of a dictatorship which had deprived the people of their liberty, annulled all departments of the government except the executive, to which even the state governments and through them the municipalities had become subject. It went on to say that since an appeal to the ballot had been disallowed, many citizens having been maltreated, imprisoned, and even slain simply because they had sought to vote, nothing was left but the resort to arms. The recent election was, therefore, proclaimed to be void and of no effect, and the date of November 20, ten days before the expiration of the presidential term, was set as the moment of the uprising. Madero assumed office meantime as provisional President, in order to direct the revolutionary movement, promising that when it had triumphed an immediate election should be held.

Madero had the rather fatuous idea that if there could be a vigorous uprising in some of the chief cities in the central part of the republic the movement



would at once succeed. He laid his plans with this in view, not seeing that the people generally were in no mood to risk their lives resisting the disciplined troops of the government, and that in populous centers any preparations for an uprising could easily be detected and suppressed. The movement as thus planned was an utter failure. It cost the lives of a few gallant spirits who are now enrolled among the patriot martyrs of their country, but it accomplished nothing else.

Meantime, however, the work of education was going forward. In the State of Sonora, which had long been harried by Corral and his clique, and in Chihuahua, a people naturally fearless and vigorous, but also much overrun by large landowners, there was a public sentiment in favor of the insurrection that was almost universal. Armed revolutionary bands were formed here and there in those states, and many smaller towns were captured, or to speak more exactly, occupied.

To Chihuahua, therefore, Madero betook himself, early in 1911 (February 13), the American government having ordered his arrest unless he ceased openly to plot against that of Mexico. His presence animated the guerilla bands and brought a measure of unity to their action. They had already had several minor engagements with the government troops, with varying success. The Díaz commander stuck rather timidly to the railway lines, and many of his men were deserting to the insurgents. Madero was not inclined to be aggressive, and some weeks later it was without his consent or initiative that Orozco

assaulted Ciudad Juárez, across the river from El Paso, which had been made headquarters of the government's army. To the surprise of everybody, the attack was successful. Juárez was captured, and the government's general was forced to surrender.

The effect of this tactically unimportant victory was electrical. The President of Mexico had found his army, always hitherto his main reliance, nothing but a shell. Corrupt officers had carried dummies on their payrolls and stolen the pay. The discontented elements throughout the country became suddenly vocal. Díaz saw that he was lost. He sent emissaries to Madero, and there was much maneuvering and intriguing. The *científicos* virtually forsook Díaz in order to make terms with Madero. It was with them rather than with the President that he found himself dealing. Against the advice of the convinced revolutionists associated with him, he came to terms with them. Díaz was to resign and leave the country, and Francisco de la Barra, then Mexican Ambassador at Washington, was to be made president *ad interim*, with a coalition cabinet. A new election was to be held, by the results of which all agreed to abide.

This program was carried through. In May the aged President, ill and worn, signed his "abdication," in which Corral, at the time in Paris, joined by cable. Within twenty-four hours Díaz quietly slipped away to Vera Cruz and sailed for Europe to pass the remainder of his days in Paris, where he died in 1915.

Madero's grandfather, Don Evaristo, head of the family, though not a member of the *científico* group in the capital, was in close touch and thorough sympathy with them, especially with José Ives Limantour, the one able and statesman-like member of the party. Don Evaristo considered his grandson a madman and implored Limantour, who during the latter part of 1910 and the early months of 1911 was in Paris, to come back and help save the situation. By the time he got back, May 1911, the fate of Díaz was sealed. It was, however, through the intervention of Limantour that de la Barra was made *ad interim* president. Many felt that Limantour was himself the one man who could be trusted to steer the ship through the troubled seas. But the momentum acquired by Madero made any change in the agreed program impossible. Limantour besides had no stomach for the bitter contest that would have been demanded to keep the *científicos* in power.

Madero went to Mexico City and there spent the summer, a popular and romantic figure. In the elections that fall he was triumphantly chosen President. Almost immediately he began to harvest the bitter fruit of his compromise. Members of his own family were, as they had long been, in close touch with the dominant group of *científicos*. Under this double pressure he formed a cabinet that, instead of helping him to put into effect the reforms which he had advocated, at every turn hindered and thwarted him.

Dissension had arisen also among his supporters, partly by reason of his course in regard to a Vice

President. He had managed to set aside his former running mate, Dr. Vázquez Gómez, and have elected instead Mr. José M. Pino Suárez.

In the north Orozco, the leading insurrectionary military figure, became dissatisfied and rebelled against the government. To put him down Madero was forced to have recourse to the remnants of the old Federal army. The one officer of military experience and ability available was General Victoriano Huerta. Though a man of drunken and brutal habits, he was skilled in warfare and soon defeated Orozco and his insurgents. This was the man who within less than two years was to overthrow and murder the President whom he had thus begun to serve. (He had been commander of the military escort that convoyed General Díaz to Vera Cruz the previous May.)

Madero's troubles as President multiplied. The *científico* group, represented by De la Barra, wished as of old to keep their hands on the government. Most of these men were venal, concerned only with fat pickings through government contracts, concessions, and special privileges. Limantour was not of this type. He had successfully solved Mexico's monetary problems; he had united her railways into one vast system; and as a final achievement he had consolidated her debt and refunded it on a five per cent basis. After the accession of Madero he quietly withdrew from Mexico and has since lived in Paris.

The new President was in many ways unfitted for the task which had devolved upon him. Impulsive, optimistic, and sentimental, he was impatient of

Careful investigation and disinclined to the weighing of evidence. Under a surface amiability he carried extreme impatience of opposition and a marked partiality for those who agreed, or pretended to agree, with himself. And, as is usual with those of amiable temperament, he was invincibly stubborn in holding to his views. The conflict between his followers who were intent on immediate reforms, especially in agrarian matters, and the *científicos* and *hacendados*, who were determined that nothing should be done against the privileged class, raged everywhere, even in the presidential cabinet.

Representatives of *científico* views, some of them of Madero's own kin, held cabinet positions. This filled the President's former followers with despair and resentment. The popular unrest was such as to constitute an invitation to plots and insurrection. General Bernardo Reyes and General Félix Díaz, the latter a nephew of the former president, had attempted uprisings and were already in prison in Mexico City. A sterner man than Madero would have had both executed. A movement for the corruption of the garrison and for the release of these two men to lead another rebellion took form under the President's very nose. But he was deaf to every warning and cheerfully confident still of the strength of his hold upon the common people. That he did cherish a very real and sincere interest in the welfare of the downtrodden classes is beyond question. But such measures as he attempted to put into operation were constantly blocked by the powerful financial and social influence of his *científico* enemies.



An undertaking so vast and intricate as the restoration of the village lands taken over under the Díaz laws would require time and freedom from the distractions of military operations. But the farmer peons were disappointed and impatient. There is evidence that the rich landowners egged them on in their restlessness in order to make as much trouble as possible for the government.

The attitude of the American Ambassador, and under his instigation of the Department of State at Washington, was so unsympathetic and nagging that it can only be described as unfriendly. Mr. Henry Lane Wilson, the Ambassador, not only took up and insistently pressed upon the President's attention every claim for damages and every complaint of alleged injustice presented by American citizens, but went out of his way to urge those of citizens of other countries. Long lists of alleged "murders" were compiled and published in the papers of the United States, only to shrink to insignificant proportions when laid alongside the actual facts. During the Orozco rebellion the Ambassador was authorized by Washington to advise at his discretion American citizens to leave any specified zones in Mexico where, due to the disorder, their lives might seem to be in danger. Mr. Wilson issued these instructions on so wide a scale that they were practically an order for all American citizens to leave Mexico. This produced a veritable panic among them, and for weeks the trains to the border were loaded with refugees.

The military plotting under the hand of General

Mondragón, an astute officer of the Díaz *régime*, went on for months. Mondragón directed it from Havana for a time, then boldly returned to Mexico. The plan was to release General Reyes, who would lead the revolt and overthrow the government. An election would then be held, and Félix Díaz would be made president. Mondragón was sure of his ability, as minister of war in the Díaz cabinet, to be the ruling spirit under the new order. General Victoriano Huerta, who had been made a major general after his victory over Orozco, but placed on the reserve list because he could not or would not account for a shortage of over a million pesos in the expenses of that campaign, was invited to come in, but replied evasively. The uprising was to take place on March 16, 1913.

Early in February definite information of the plot reached the President's brother, Mr. Gustavo Madero, with the names of those implicated. He saw at a glance that it included nearly all the superior line and field officers of the army in and near Mexico City. If these men could take their troops with them, as is always probable in Mexico, the government was doomed. Mr. Madero rushed to his brother, the President, with the list and his story, only to find him obdurate. The thing was a hoax, he declared; it simply could not be true.

The more discerning and suspicious brother, however, proceeded to do a good deal of quiet investigating. It all tended to confirm the existence of the plot. It had also the effect of arousing the suspicion of the conspirators. Their plans were well

laid; so they simply hurried up matters by shifting the date to February 10. During the midnight hours preceding that day the movement of cavalry and artillery toward the city from the Tacubaya barracks aroused a forest guard of Chapultepec. He advised a friend, and this friend took the matter to Gustavo Madero. Thereupon began, in the small hours of February 10, 1913, one of the most amazing and dramatic episodes ever enacted in even the dramatic history of turbulent Mexico. Two eye witnesses, situated so as to know the most intimate details of it, have written the story of the "*decena trágica*," the tragic ten days, as it has ever since been called. These are Mr. Edward I. Bell,<sup>1</sup> an American citizen, at the time editor and publisher of two daily papers in Mexico City, one in English and one in Spanish, and an intimate personal friend of Gustavo Madero as well as of the President, and Sr. Márquez Sterling,<sup>2</sup> the minister to Mexico of the Republic of Cuba. To these volumes the reader is referred for trustworthy details of an episode which can here be set forth only in outline.

The plan was to liberate General Reyes from his cell in the penitentiary, on the east side of the city. He was then to place himself at the head of the disloyal troops which had effected his rescue and with them and part of the cadets of the Cavalry Training School at Tlalpam, who had also been corrupted, to march at dawn to the national palace

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<sup>1</sup> "The Political Shame of Mexico," by E. I. Bell.

<sup>2</sup> "Los Ultimos Días del Presidente Madero," by Márquez Sterling.

on the central square of the city. The squad of guards who were holding the palace were prepared to throw open the doors, permitting the insurgents to march in and take possession. The President, who was sleeping at Chapultepec, three miles away to the southwest, would then find himself shut out of his offices and without headquarters.

Meantime the garrison of the arsenal (*Ciudadela*), where Felix Díaz was confined, a medieval fortress also lying off to the southwest, but in the heart of the city, not more than a mile from the palace, was to rise, seize the place, and set Díaz free to become their commander. Gustavo Madero, having unearthed the details of the plan from certain army officers whom he had befriended, at 4 A.M. rushed headlong to the palace. There by sheer audacity and an appeal to the common soldiers of the corrupted guard, many of whom did not like either Reyes or Díaz, he succeeded in disarming the squad of cadets who formed part of the guard and in so disconcerting the disloyal officer who was in command that he held the men wavering till the arrival in the early dawn of a commander of the guard, General Villar, who was loyal to the President. The unfaithful colonel was locked up, and General Villar took command. General Reyes, feeling sure that all was ready for his reception, had been slow in coming. Upon his appearance about seven o'clock the troops within were ready, not to welcome, but to resist. The students had been marched into an inner court and left under guard.

On the flat roof machine guns were posted, and the

big doors were closed and prepared for defense. The large square had begun to fill with market men and early laborers, who watched the arrival of the small body of troops, accompanied by the youthful cadets, in complete innocence of the impending tragedy. General Reyes personally rode forward and demanded that the gates be opened. In response he was ordered to halt and surrender. There was a moment of confusion. Reyes started forward again, and the firing began. The machine guns in the hands of the excited soldiers began their deadly rat-tat. Not lowered sufficiently to do much harm to the rebellious soldiers, they made havoc of the innocent citizens in the background. General Reyes himself was shot dead at the first fire. His men promptly melted away into the neighboring cross streets. Unhappily, General Villar was also shot and severely wounded. This left the soldiers in the palace, now thoroughly repentant and begging Gustavo Madero to believe that it had been against their will that they were led into treason, without a commander, for the President's brother was a civilian.

Meanwhile Félix Díaz and General Mondragón, an astute and able officer who had been the soul of the insurgent uprising, had left the Arsenal with their troops and artillery and were approaching the palace plaza. Met by the news of the sanguinary battle that had taken place, they promptly counter-marched, taking refuge again in the Arsenal.

It was Sunday morning, and the sun shone brightly. About nine o'clock President Madero appeared riding a handsome white horse on the main street



leading from Chapultepec to the Palace. Following him were a body of loyal troops and the infantry cadets from the Chapultepec Military Academy. Opposite the huge unfinished National Theater building near the corner of the Alameda he was stopped by friends who protested against his going farther. While he parleyed with them, a shot was fired at him from the unfinished theater. An accidental movement of his horse saved his life, the bullet passing on and killing a negro bystander on the opposite walk. Calmly sending a detachment to capture the would-be assassin, the President sent his escort back and rode smiling along in the direction of the Plaza.

Shocked when he arrived there at sight of the dead bodies lying everywhere, he rushed forward into his offices and took command of the situation. The cabinet was summoned. A court martial was ordered for the treacherous colonel who had been in command and a general who had been captured from among the escort of General Reyes, and before night both were sentenced and shot. General Victoriano Huerta was summoned to the palace and placed in command of the army.

This crafty old Indian had been aware of what was going on, but had declined to join the uprising. Now, it would seem, he began at once to be as disloyal at heart as were the openly rebellious leaders. One of them, Reyes, was eliminated. Díaz, the other, was a nonentity and his place of defense a sham. Modern artillery would have knocked it to bits in half an hour. Yet for ten days Huerta pre-

tended to be fighting Díaz and Mondragón, and kept the city in an uproar and the country and the rest of the world completely mystified. Ostensibly the Palace was bombarding the Arsenal and the Arsenal was returning the fire. But the missiles instead of finding these objectives went crashing here and there through the city, carrying damage and terror into the homes of innocent citizens. The President gathered to himself from every available quarter troops that were loyal to him, only to have them sent by Huerta in close formation along open streets to be butchered by the machine guns of the Arsenal. That was really the only fighting that took place. Generals who were loyal, understanding better than Madero what was going on, dared not make an overt move.

Meantime, as has since transpired, midnight conclaves had begun, in which Huerta wrangled with Mondragón and Díaz as to what course should be taken and who should have the lion's share of the spoils, once the now helpless President and his civilian supporters should be disposed of. It cannot be anything but a source of shame to the United States that our Ambassador, by virtue of his rank the dean of the diplomatic corps, began early to align himself with those who were closing in upon the legally chosen head of the government of a friendly nation. He presently began to urge Madero to resign in the interest of restoring order, and it was in the American Embassy that a final meeting between Díaz and Huerta took place and a compact

was drawn up and signed for the future control of the country.

Meantime the President's office at the palace had become his prison. Under orders from Huerta, one General Blanquet, to his disgrace, went with a small squad of armed men into the presence of the President and rudely arrested and disarmed him. Those about Madero resisted, and two or three men on either side were killed, but the civilians had to yield.

The plan agreed upon by the conspirators was that Huerta should become provisional President, accepting as members of his cabinet representatives of the conspirators and of the old anti-Madero or "*científico*" party. Later a regular election was to be held, in which Félix Díaz was to receive the support of all as candidate for the presidency. It is probable that Huerta agreed to this latter part of the plan with reservations of his own. He would as easily find means to prolong the period of his hold on power as he had managed to prolong the sham battle in the city's streets.

Inside the coterie of conspirators a quarrel raged as to what should be done with the Maderos. Gustavo was doomed. Too many of them hated him. Even more feared him. Huerta would not agree to an execution of the President. He rightly feared the reaction such a step would provoke. Madero knew that his life hung by a thread. His devoted wife was given to understand that she and her husband would be sent away. The minister of Cuba, Sr. Sterling, gladly made all arrangements to convey them to Havana on a Cuban ship of war. It

seems probable that Ambassador Wilson thought this plan was carried out. But Díaz, Mondragón, and the son of Reyes were implacable. They wanted the President done away with. Huerta wavered.

Meantime the twenty-second of February came around. The diplomatic corps and the prospective President and cabinet assembled in the evening at the American Embassy to honor George Washington. During the festivities there the doomed President was taken at midnight to an automobile ostensibly to be transferred, with Suárez, his Vice President, to the more secure precincts of the penitentiary. Next morning his dead body and that of his companion lay outside the prison walls—on the side opposite the gate. During the day the American Ambassador, who, despite the pleadings and warnings of Mrs. Madero and of the Cuban minister, had not lifted a finger to save Madero's life, was overheard stridently rebuking a member of the incoming cabinet for the atrocity of which he and his companions had been guilty. Gustavo Madero, three days before, had been arrested, taken to the Arsenal, and atrociously butchered.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CARRANZA

VENUSTIANO CARRANZA, in 1913 governor of Coahuila, native state of the Maderos, of which Don Evaristo, grandfather of the martyred President, had also at one time been governor, had been in complete sympathy with the Madero revolution. He had joined Madero in El Paso in the spring of 1911, and when the first provisional cabinet of the revolutionary leader was organized was made minister of war. It is of record that when this group was dissolved by the compromise which Madero made with the *científicos* Carranza said to him: "You are handing to your country a dead revolution. It will have to be fought over again."

Like his chief, Carranza was of the landed aristocracy and a creole, that is, of pure Spanish stock. In parenthesis it may be remarked that the old families of the northern states of Mexico show less admixture of native blood than those of the central section of the country. This is due to the fact that when those regions were colonized the native inhabitants were nomadic Indians of a low grade of culture. There was little contact between them and the colonists. One outcome of this situation, along with the influence of their closer touch with the Saxon civilization north of the Rio Grande, has been a more democratic attitude among these fam-



ilies of Spanish blood than is to be found in the creole communities of central Mexico. In particular the prejudice against trade and the disdain of manual labor have been much diminished.

During the *decena trágica* (February, 1913), when to all appearances the government of Madero was at death grips with an armed uprising, Carranza sent to Madero's aid in Mexico City several companies of Coahuila state troops, whose loyalty to him and to the President could not be questioned. When Huerta's treachery finally came into the open, and the disloyal Indian general had seized the government which he had professed to be defending, he and Díaz sent by personal messenger a long and wheedling message to Carranza. Most of the state governors had accepted the new situation as inevitable. Not so the sturdy chief magistrate of Coahuila. Although on a main artery of the national railroad, exposed to quick reprisal, and without a respectable military force of his own with which to confront the veterans of Díaz and Huerta, he did not hesitate. Recurring to the oath he had taken to uphold the Federal constitution as well as that of his own state, he denounced Huerta as an usurper and called on all loyal citizens of the republic to rally to himself in support of the constitution.

Having by this defiance of Huerta and his *científico* supporters made himself a marked man, Carranza at once began to exhibit those qualities of decision and energy which were to stamp his career during the next seven years, a period in which he was the chief figure in Mexican affairs. It will not

be amiss before we follow him further to pause for a look at this man. Physically and mentally he was the complete antithesis of Madero. Tall, broad-shouldered, erect, sturdy, his large frame and gray-blue eyes suggested lineal descent from the Goths who for five centuries made their home in the rough mountains of northern Spain. He was self-contained, reticent, almost taciturn of speech, listening quietly and answering with nods or monosyllables. He proved to be the despair of youthful newspaper correspondents from north of the Rio Grande, who, knowing no Spanish, could get nothing out of a man who used few words of his own language and none at all of English, although he understood and could read it. Many of them vented their spite, picturing him as stupid or proud, or both, and as doddering with old age. This fantastic notion arose from the fact that, after the fashion of his country, he wore a full beard, which was turning gray. As a matter of fact he was only fifty-four years old and of a physical endurance and resiliency which were as much the despair of his associates as his manner was of the correspondents who visited his camps.

His family being in comfortable circumstances, he had in his youth studied for the profession of law, but before finishing his course had had to give it up because of a weakness of his eyes. He therefore took up the life on the family estate of a gentleman farmer. Later his sight improved, and he became an assiduous reader and student, especially of history and government. It was thus not as a tyro in such matters that he undertook the government of

his own state and later set out to lead a movement to reestablish constitutional control in his nation. Few men in history have been more maligned and misrepresented. While he was striving to overthrow Huerta, February, 1913, to July, 1914, the supporters of the usurper painted him as a coarse and ignorant adventurer, no better than a bandit. As these backers of Huerta represented the aristocracy and *intelligentsia* of Mexico and had ample access to the public press of both Mexico and the United States, this conception of the constitutionalist chief became generally accepted. Since his overthrow and death in 1920, as the result of a split in his own party, those who were responsible for that indefensible debacle have sought to put as good a light on their own course as possible by blackening the reputation and defaming the administration of the man who had been their leader and became their victim. And during the whole of his term in office, first as Chief of the insurrection and later as President, affairs in Mexico were in such disorder and the World War produced so great a state of hysteria, both there and elsewhere, that the real sentiments and constructive work of Carranza never became properly known or rightly valued.

Recognizing instantly after defying Huerta in 1913 that in the easily accessible regions of his native state he would not have a chance to hold out long enough to rally to him the masses of the people, loyal still as he knew them to be to their murdered President and his ideals, he fixed his eye on the isolated and comparatively safe reaches of the

State of Sonora, far to the west and on the other side of the huge Sierra Madre Mountains, without rail connection with Mexico City. Mounting his horse and gathering about him a group of trusty army officers and other followers, not large enough to attract attention or be easily pursued, he vanished into the chaparral of northern Mexico. Before disappearing, however, he and his companions issued from the little village of Guadalupe the indispensable "plan" without which no revolutionary movement in Mexico can get under way.

This "*Plan de Guadalupe*" is in the terse and pointed manner which marks all the utterances of Carranza. After reciting in a brief preamble the treachery of Huerta and the fact that he had been supported in it by the legislative and judicial branches of the Federal government, and that some even of the states had followed suit, despite the fact that their own sovereignty had been invaded, the document declares that all branches of the Federal government are disowned as illegitimate. Also that all state governments which within thirty days did not unite with the revolutionary movement would likewise be held as void. These declarations were followed by the usual provisions for holding an election, once the revolution should succeed, and for the organization and conduct of the movement itself. Governor Carranza was designated as "First Chief" (*Primer Jefe*) of the revolutionary forces, a phrase which means something more than commander in chief, as it implies civic as well as military duties. This paper issued from the hacienda of

Guadalupe, in the State of Coahuila, was signed by sixty-four men, mostly military officers.

During the previous six weeks Carranza had been occupied with perfecting local organizations, especially of town governments, loyal to himself and the cause. He began by influencing the state legislature to pass a bill denouncing the Huerta rebellion and declaring that Coahuila would disown it. He said to a friend when leaving Saltillo, "We are going to fight the three-years war over again." This was the war of 1858-60, in which army and Church had united in defense of their special privileges (*fueros*) which had been set aside by the constitution of 1857. Carranza's father, a colonel in the patriot army of Juárez, had not only fought in that war, but had contributed money to the amount of about sixteen thousand Mexican dollars. When later the Juárez government wished to reimburse him, he refused the money, remarking that the triumph of the cause was a sufficient return on his investment.

For the next month or two Carranza went on with his preparations in his own state. There were a few brushes with the Federals, in which the constitutionalists usually lost. By July they felt bold enough to attack the garrison at Torreón, but the assault was a failure. Emissaries of the First Chief were at work in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León, and he knew that the far northwest, beyond the mountains, was in sympathy with him. It was that region which first rallied to Madero, and the people there, in spite of the defection of Orozco, had remained loyal to him. So Carranza, seeking a base where he



might undisturbed plan his campaign, soon set out for Sonora. In the company of a group of trusty companions, he made this trip half across the continent and over a huge range of mountains, a distance of about one thousand miles, accomplishing it in six weeks. They traveled most of the time at night, resting by day. It was summer, and they rode in light marching order, sleeping with saddles for pillows. Their leader was tireless, last to retire and first up, cheerful, urbane, watchful, democratic. As a ranchman he was thoroughly used to horseback travel. But many members of his escort, unused to the saddle, groaned loud and long at the pace which he set.

Meantime all over northern Mexico small groups, squads of militia and even of Federal soldiers, town councils and the rest, were announcing their adherence to the rebellion. There had been several clashes with government forces, and a price was on the head of Carranza. The people, in ranch and village especially, rallied to him as if by instinct. Not seldom in the long night rides muffled figures would appear by the roadside as the ghostly procession moved by. At first they caused apprehension. It was soon found, however, that they were always the same, simple peasants, men and women and children, who came, on foot and often long distances, to greet the new leader and wish him God-speed. How they became apprised of the passing of a cavalcade for which the government itself was vainly searching far and wide was never known. Their dumb appeal and their simple blessings greatly

cheered the heart of the man who was fast finding himself to be a man of destiny.

Turning considerably southward into Durango in order to reach a pass through the sierra, Carranza emerged first into the State of Sinaloa at Fuerte. From the northeast corner of that state he and his rather dilapidated horsemen continued to Sonora, reaching at last railway connection with Hermosillo, the capital of the state. The long horseback journey ended about the middle of September, 1913.

At Fuerte Carranza had met for the first time Alvaro Obregón. This young man, a farmer by occupation, had already won distinction as a military leader. During the previous summer the fragments of the Orozco forces, after their crushing defeat at Rellano by General Huerta, had sought refuge in Sonora. The citizens of that state, loyal to Madero, resented their presence and in order to combat them increased their state militia by a number of volunteers. Obregón, having raised a battalion of mounted men, was commissioned lieutenant colonel and later colonel. The rebels were defeated and scattered and their remaining military supplies taken from them. Just as this task was completed and Obregón prepared to return to private life, the astounding news of the Huerta-Díaz usurpation came from Mexico. The leading men of the state, with apparently the single exception of the governor, Sr. José María Maytorena, were a unit in remaining loyal to Madero and after his death to the constitution.

After a few weeks of vacillation, Maytorena asked

for leave of absence and crossed the line into the United States, taking with him all the money there was in the State treasury "to pay his salary during his leave." The legislature elected as substitute governor (*interino*) Ignacio L. Pesqueira and proceeded at once to repudiate Huerta as President. Obregón and his associates among the state troops, having risked their lives already for Madero and the legitimate Federal government, threw themselves with the utmost enthusiasm into this new issue. There were garrisons of Federal troops at several points on the border and at the leading sea ports, especially Guaymas. These could be counted on to support Huerta. To free the border of them and thus open communication with the United States was the first move. In the capture one after the other of Nogales, Naco and Agua Prieta, wresting them successively from forces superior in number and better equipped than his own, Obregón began to display that native genius for military operations which marked all his later campaigns. In several years of marching and fighting he never really lost a battle.

Sonora had meantime received news of the *Plan de Guadalupe*, and soldiers and civilians alike gladly aligned themselves under the "*Primer Jefe*." When Obregón's prowess was reported to Carranza the Chief appointed him brigadier general. The general plan for the military campaign was thus taking shape. An eastern column, forming in and about Monterrey and Saltillo, was to move down that side of the plateau, on the general line of the old Nation-

al railway. Starting from opposite El Paso, another was to follow the Mexican Central, via Chihuahua, Torreón, Zacatecas, etc. West of the sierra a Western column was to go down the coast, flanking Guadalajara and converging with the other two upon the capital. The three commanders were by this time pretty well settled upon. Pablo González was to lead the eastern, Francisco Villa, a former associate of Orozco who had not followed him in his rebellion, was to command the center, and Alvaro Obregón the western column.

Making his way to Hermosillo—for after their defeat along the border the Federals had also with great losses been defeated and bottled up in the port of Guaymas—Carranza settled down to organize his campaign. The military side was uppermost, necessarily. But, experienced administrator that he was, he began from the first to plan the organization of the country as it should be gradually occupied. He knew that two interests lay nearest of all to the hearts of the Mexican people, agriculture and education. It was his purpose to put both these on a new footing. So he very soon had commissions of young men and women in the United States, making a detailed study of education and preparing themselves for future leadership. As for agriculture, he announced from the beginning that not only should the Indians have their communal lands restored to them, but that steps were going to be taken to divide up the overgrown estates, to provide public lands which could be made available for homesteading by the poor. Resistance to these agrarian policies has been from

then until now uncommonly stubborn. As these lines are written, fourteen years later, the government of Mexico is not only facing landowners who decline to accept the proposed subdivision of their acreage, but is involved in a heated controversy with the government of the United States. Our citizens who own large tracts of land in Mexico are as unwilling as are the Mexican landowners to co-operate with the government.

The problem of finance was one which might well have been expected to baffle, if not completely to defeat, the ambitions of a campaign to cover the whole republic of Mexico. The people of the border states were so universally friendly to the insurrection against Huerta, wisely called from its inception a "Constitutionalist" movement, that the principal gateways to the United States were soon cleared of Federal troops and thrown open to Carranza. Arms and military supplies had to be smuggled, but the main problem was that of money. The legislature of Coahuila, after seconding the stand of the governor (Carranza) against the usurpation of Huerta, voted to place in his hands, as *Primer Jefe*, all the ready money then available in the state treasury. These funds sufficed till he reached Sonora. There the capture of the custom houses in Nogales and Agua Prieta enabled the constitutionalists to take over the income from import duties. So they proceeded to do later at Juárez, Piedras Negras, Laredo, and Matamoros, getting control soon also of the Gulf port of Tampico.



A partisan of Carranza,<sup>1</sup> writing two years later, lists the Constitutionalist sources of income as follows:

"1. The interior war tax, which was paid by Mexican and foreign commercial mining and industrial firms doing business in the northern states, besides the taxes paid by the *hacendados*.

"2. Custom house duties at all the border towns on imports and exports, foodstuffs, cattle, ore, metals, clothing, etc. These were payable in gold.

"3. Forced loans from the enemies of the Constitutionals.

"4. Voluntary loans by friends of the revolution, landowners, miners, capitalists.

"5. The creation of an interior debt by the issue of paper money, to be circulated in the territory under the control of the revolution. The circulation therein of the bills issued by the Banco Nacional of Mexico City was prohibited."

Military governors of the several states and the commanding generals were allowed also to issue paper money. By May of 1914 thirty-two millions of pesos (face value fifty cents gold) had been issued by the Carranza government. In Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, and other states there were also local issues. This money was naturally depreciated from the beginning. But it soon drove all metal coins into hiding and became the one medium of exchange. During the years 1915 and 1916, when the *ad interim* government of Carranza was slowly getting

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<sup>1</sup> "Carranza and Mexico," by Carlo de Fornaro. (1915.)

settled after the defection and rebellion of Villa, earnest efforts were made to call in and redeem this flood of worn-out and depreciated paper money. As it had never circulated at anything like its face value, the government was at a loss to set a redemption value which should be reasonably just. The situation was complicated by huge speculations in the depreciated bills. Late in 1916 the knot was cut by a sudden return to coinage. To the surprise of everybody, enough of gold and silver was soon in circulation to serve the ordinary needs of business. A large mass of the old paper was called in and redeemed at a few cents on the dollar. Mexico has ever since been on a coin basis. The achievement of the government in getting the country back, over night, as it were, upon a sound money basis was qualified in the mind of many critics by the fact that the bulk of the internal debt, represented by the paper money, was virtually repudiated. It was the price Mexico paid for the revolution. But this is to anticipate. Let us return to the development of the Constitutionalist movement.

While Obregón and his associates of the "Northwestern Division," as it was henceforward called, were clearing Sonora and Sinaloa of Federal forces Villa was ranging through the states of Chihuahua and Coahuila, recruiting men, securing equipment, and fighting Federal detachments here and there, organizing the "Northern Division." At the same time Pablo González, who had been a friend and neighbor of Carranza, was in Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, organizing the "Northeastern Division."

The First Chief was meantime busy with both civic and military affairs. He took especial pains to keep the lines of communication open, operating telegraph and telephone lines, seeing that the mails functioned regularly and the trains ran on time. By January of 1914, Juárez having meantime been taken, he returned to the east of the mountains and joined Villa at his headquarters.

This ex-highwayman was a picturesque individual and reveled in publicity. Abysmally ignorant, of violent temper and brutal instincts, without self-control or training of any kind, he had withal a generous amiability and an unsophisticated *camaraderie* that made him popular. His military skill was insignificant, consisting only of a belief in rash and headlong frontal attacks, without regard to the safety of his men. Aside from his brutal passions and his naturally criminal instincts, his worst failing was the ease with which he could be handled by designing friends. General Felipe Angeles, an artillery officer of the old Díaz army, had come from Paris to join the Constitutionalist movement. Carranza accepted him in good faith and sent him to aid Villa. For that ill-starred adventurer, as well as for the country itself, he became an evil genius.

In spite of the difficulties of his campaign, a mountain terrain, lack of railway transportation, as well as the need of guarding his rear, open to Federal attack from the various Pacific ports which he could not close, Obregón emerged with his Western Division on the central plateau at Guadalajara early in August. With his footsore and ill-conditioned

troops he promptly attacked and defeated a Federal column of twelve thousand men. Rapidly seizing the main roads leading back to the city and at the same time sending forward a column to occupy the railway to the capital, he cut off the scattered Federal army both from taking refuge in Guadalajara and fleeing by rail toward Mexico City. Immense stores of supplies fell into his hands, and the Federal column was annihilated. On August 17 (1914), with his headquarters in the statehouse of Jalisco, he wired to his Chief the report of his success.

Meantime the movement of Villa down the central sector and that of González to the east had been gradually, if somewhat more slowly, developed. Villa's headquarters were usually well supplied with newspaper reporters, who found the bandit chieftain far more interesting and picturesque than the gray-haired *Jefe*, bespectacled and silent, eternally working at his desk. Their crude adulation had a good deal to do with turning the head of the ignorant and impulsive general. By mid-summer he was almost openly insubordinate. As early as June he wired to Obregón a proposal that they set aside the Chief and formulate a plan of their own. This Obregón bluntly rejected.

The most important of Villa's operations was the capture of Torreón. By reason of its railway connections this little city is the military key to Northern Mexico. Once it fell, Monterrey and Saltillo were given up, and the whole north was in the hands of the Constitutionalists. Because of the insubordination of Villa there was a period of confusion and

delay, but by the time Obregón took Guadalajara the two other columns were as far south as Aguascalientes and San Luís Potosí, respectively. The subordinate leaders of the two divisions showed a good deal of partiality to Villa, even some who were serving under González, himself a rather colorless personality.

The Federal troops were fighting rather listlessly. Many of them were drafted men, and their generals stuck closely to the railways. This originated the general policy on the part of the insurrectionists of doing as much damage as they could to the tracks and rolling stock, a policy that ultimately cost them and the country dear. Huerta was himself the only really able general on his side. He was, however, too much infatuated with the perquisites of the presidency to leave his capital for the hardships of campaigning. He entered there upon an orgy of vice and dissoluteness which was the despair of the respectable elements which had aligned themselves with him. Persons having business with him were forced to seek him in drinking saloons and other malodorous resorts. He required all his retainers to be dressed in military uniforms and was reported even to have made one of his favorites among the women of the town a vice admiral of the navy!

Despite the backing of the *Científico* group and of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, he was unable to obtain recognition for his government from the United States. President Wilson had taken office only a few weeks after Huerta seized the presidency of Mexico. He and Mr. Bryan, his Secretary of



State, felt such a horror of the brutal coup which had overthrown Madero that they would not yield to the pressure of the business interests which were hoping that Huerta would bring in again the prosperous days and favorable policies of President Díaz. It was a vain hope, at best, given the type of man who was then at the head of Mexican affairs and the manifest fact that the rebellion against him represented not only constitutional right, but even more the aspirations of the common people of the country. Díaz himself had been driven out by that rising tide of protest against the exploitation of the poor by the rich, and it was inevitable that Huerta should go. This he evidently understood. His whole attitude was that of a man determined to make the most of his day of power and luxury while it lasted.

Partisans of Huerta, both Mexican and foreign, have complained bitterly that it was the attitude of President Wilson which was his undoing. That attitude made its contribution, no doubt. But even before the American government recognized the Constitutionals as belligerents, opening the way for them to supply themselves the more readily with munitions, their campaign had progressed to a point where there was little doubt as to its outcome. As a matter of fact, the controversy over the arrest of American marines at Tampico and the futile gesture of landing troops at Vera Cruz gave Huerta a new lease of political life. He was able to pose as the patriotic Mexican defying the "Colossus of the

North" and defending his country against foreign aggression.

Both these episodes are so well known that no detailed account of them need be given here. Along with the Pershing expedition of 1916 they were utterly fruitless as concerned their prime objective. Their main value was as a safety-valve to American jingoism, which under the instigation of the oil men and of other investors in Mexico, as well as the political opponents of President Wilson, had been worked up to the point where there was serious danger of a war with Mexico. The Pershing expedition, especially, raised in some quarters high hopes that the American government was at last going to adopt a "strong policy" toward Mexico, and the critics of the Democratic administration quieted down. But the President held the expedition strictly to its original purpose and withdrew it when there was no longer any promise of success. Subsequent criticism of President Wilson as inconsistent and meddlesome has paid back with interest the temporary political truce secured by the sending of this expedition.

As the Constitutionalist columns began to converge toward Mexico City in the late summer of 1914 events moved rapidly. On July 15 Huerta, seeing the handwriting on the wall, issued a bombastic "resignation," quietly gathered what booty he could carry with him, and departed from Mexico, passing through Vera Cruz, following a long line of rejected rulers, Iturbide, Santa Ana, Comonfort, Carlota, Lerdo de Tejada, Porfirio Díaz, and taking

refuge on a German ship, departed for Europe. One month later, Obregón, at the head of his army, occupied Mexico City.

The dissension among the Constitutionalists, held in check by the exigencies of the military campaign, burst into flame immediately, once success was achieved. The issue was mainly one of Villa against Carranza. This was further complicated by the success and popularity of an independent movement in the south, led by the Zapata brothers. These were Indians who led a revolt of the agricultural peons, exploited there during many years as perhaps nowhere else in Mexico. They had only meager success, but due to the wild mountainous region in which they operated could not be suppressed. When pressure in the north drew off most of the Federal forces, Zapata came into control of the whole State of Morelos and at the time of the change in government was advancing upon Mexico City.

He—one of the brothers named Emiliano was the recognized leader—had never identified himself with the Constitutionalist movement. Now, with his horde of undisciplined Indians, he was in doubt as between Villa and Carranza. The menace of his army was such that the First Chief decided not to tarry in the capital and began to make his way toward Vera Cruz. To avoid a conflict, Obregón withdrew his forces and followed his Chief. Then Villa appeared, and he and Zapata, reaching Mexico about the same time, made friends and let their soldiers loose for a round of looting. After a few months Zapata was emboldened to launch an attack

upon the forces of Carranza, whereupon he was soundly trounced by Obregón's veterans and his military power broken. He retired to the rugged mountains of Morelos.

Meantime Carranza proposed that a conference of all the military leaders of the rank of general should be held in order to resolve the conflict and decide upon a course of procedure. This conference was called to meet the first of October, 1914, in Mexico City. Plots and counterplots filled the air. Obregón went to Chihuahua to see Villa and to try to clear up a difficult situation in his native state of Sonora, where Maytorena was still making trouble. He narrowly escaped with his life, Villa having become angered and ordered out a firing squad to execute his rival. Obregón's unperturbed courage—he was a guest in Villa's house—along with pressure from Villa's advisers, saved his life. Even then, when he started back to Mexico Villa had one of his officers go ahead with troops to waylay and assassinate him. This time Obregón was saved by an accident, his train passing the other which had stopped with a hot box while the commander, the only one advised as to its purpose, was asleep.

The government of the United States was, like Zapata, uncertain as to whether it should favor Villa or Carranza, but finally decided in favor of the First Chief. Though supported by some of the oil and mining interests, the romantic newspaper correspondents, and by many of the old *Díaz-científico* group, Villa upon investigation was found to be "impossible."

Villa objected to the meeting of generals being held in Mexico City. After a good deal of jockeying it was decided to convene it in Aguascalientes. Carranza told friends that he would give way to the leader designated at the meeting, provided it was not Villa, and provided Villa too would give up his place at the head of his troops. Villa, before the convention met, moved a strong body of his men down to Aguascalientes. His attitude was so menacing that many of the generals would not come in person, but sent members of their staff to represent them. Throughout the meeting the attitude of Villa's supporters was one of insolent browbeating. One of the Carranza followers was actually forced into a brawl and killed. The Council settled upon General Eulalio Gutierrez as provisional President of Mexico. He immediately designated Villa as commander of the army. Carranza and his followers, as a result of this, repudiated the acts of the convention as taken under duress, and for several months there was a period of enormous confusion. Mexico was really without a government. The United States and the A. B. C. nations, which had offered their good offices, looked on helplessly.

Villa managed to use his new power to get into his hands most of the troops then under arms. The loyal brigades of Obregón's division had become reduced by the expiration of terms of enlistment and the return of the hardy westerners to their homes. But Obregón, reorganizing his forces as best he could, once more took the field. Facing Villa first at Celaya, with a force only about one-third the



strength of that of his opponent, he provoked the impulsive egotist into one of his favorite frontal attacks. Steady rifle and machine gun fire cut down the attackers in swaths, and Villa was disastrously defeated. Pushed hard by the vigilant Sonoran, he stood again at León. This was a bloody engagement, disastrous to both sides. It was really a drawn conflict, but Villa decided to withdraw to Aguascalientes. Obregón was severely wounded, losing his right arm.

It was many weeks before he could again attack, but at last he did so, defeating his opponent in the environs of Aguascalientes so completely that he in a panic left on his private train for the north, making no effort to draw off his troops. His army was thus dissipated and his military power broken. A few weeks later Carranza was recognized by President Wilson as the *de facto* ruler of Mexico.

Once more in Chihuahua, Villa entered upon a career of banditry and murder, trying, particularly after the recognition of Carranza, to affront and damage the Americans. He murdered a group of engineers at Santa Ysabel and later raided Columbus, New Mexico, killing a number of citizens. This occasioned the Pershing expedition into Mexico in pursuit of him. Among others to feel his heavy hand about this time was his old partner in crime, Tomás Urbina. Urbina had brought away from San Luís Potosí, forced out by the advance of Obregón, a whole train load of plunder, forcibly taken from the homes of that city. Villa quarreled with him over this loot and shot him with his own hand. This was

by no means the only instance in which he had thus given way to his criminal instincts.

The victories of Obregón eliminated Villa, as earlier they had Zapata, and the First Chief remained First Chief. Returning to his capital, he faced an enormous task. The country was devastated, the railways were wrecked, agriculture was neglected, business at a standstill. Foreigners, American citizens especially, had nearly all left the country. The treason of Villa had profoundly shaken the Constitutionalist group. There were few of whom Carranza could be sure. The United States had recognized him as *de facto* President, but he delayed the reestablishment of constitutional civil government chiefly for two reasons. One of these—fantastic to outsiders, but not so to the Mexican mind—was that the constitution of 1857 did not fully express the ideals of the new order. Time must, therefore, be given to framing a new constitution. Critics were prompt enough to point out the inconsistency of calling the movement “Constitutionalist” and then repudiating the constitution. But this objection weighed little with the Mexicans. Did they not propose to perpetuate all that was in the document of 1857 and even add to it? This, in reality, is what was accomplished in the constitution of 1917. (See below, Chapter X.)

The other reason was a far more practical matter. The country was overrun by bandits. Fragments of the scattered forces of Villa and Zapata, wandering bands of soldiers whose time had expired, but who had each managed to salvage a rifle, made life and

property unsafe everywhere. The situation was one which could be dealt with only under martial law. Hence the army was kept functioning, especially the officials, of whom such a multitude remained on the payroll that the expense was a severe drain on the government's income.

There were few to sympathize with Mexico's ruler. Business interests, both domestic and foreign, blamed him for having begun a rebellion that was depriving them of their dividends and promised no early relief. The people were clamorous for educational and agrarian reform. Commerce was hampered beyond endurance by a deflated fiat currency, a mass of worn and filthy paper bills rapidly becoming worthless rags. Rebellion was again brewing in the Northwest, with the marplot Maytorena at the head of it. Too many of the smaller groups of the army proved to be as fond of looting and booty as were the bandits whom they were sent to chastise. Subordinate army officers, and not a few generals, were venal and incompetent. The management of the railways was a mass of corruption. Carranza, restraining his wayward soldiers as much as he dared, labored incessantly at the educational and agrarian problems, seeking to give to the common man some of the benefits which Constitutionalist promises had led the people to expect.

The Constitutional convention met in the fall of 1916. It was wisely determined that it should not sit in the capital, where political passions and plots were seething; so Querétaro was selected, a city made famous by the defeat and death of Maximilian. The

members of the convention were popularly chosen, but with the limitation—of questionable wisdom—that none but loyal Constitutionalists would be seated. Despite this rather drastic effort to procure unity, there was much clashing of interests and opinions. Carranza showed his usual restraint in not seeking personally to dominate the body. In the end some of the new instrument's provisions proved decidedly distasteful to him. Yet once the document was finished, he loyally accepted and promulgated it. This was on the fifth of February (1917), the day long honored because of the proclamation on that date just sixty years earlier of the liberal constitution of 1857.

The legal position of this new organic law would doubtless have been stronger if instead of a new document there had been a revision of the constitution of 1857, the changes made in accordance with the provisions of that document for its own amendment. But the attitude of the Latin American nations toward their constitutions differs radically from Anglo-Saxon standards. They feel that any popular movement which is able to secure political power has the right, even the obligation, to express its ideals in a constitution, which shall remain the organic law of the land so long as those ideals are in the ascendant. And as for the case in hand, Mexicans consider that so long as the constitution of 1917 restates and develops the principles embodied in that of 1857, its substitution for that document implies neither disrespect nor disloyalty—just the contrary, in fact.

The constitution of 1917 is indeed a genuine re-

production and development of that of 1857. It affirms and makes even more drastic the outstanding objective of that document, which was to do away with clericalism. The nationalization of church property was carried somewhat farther than before, for the rapid accumulation of wealth by the Roman Catholic hierarchy during the later decades of the Díaz administration seemed to the men who framed the constitution to threaten a return of that Church domination which had so vexed the country from 1821 to 1857. This they determined, at any cost, to prevent. It is this legislation, designed, in political matters at least, to subordinate Church to state, which has been one of the chief points of attack on the new constitution. Yet, except as to details, some of them vexatious, to be sure, it merely continues on the lines laid down sixty years earlier.

The resistance of the clerical group to the new constitution has been reënforced by the representatives of capital. At two points, at least, it touches them. One concerns the provisions regulating labor—hours, wages, the right to organize and even to strike, etc.—and the other involves the articles in reference to state ownership and control of lands and national resources. The full discussion of this constitution is reserved for a later chapter.

The proclamation of the new constitution in Mexico was contemporaneous with the entrance of the United States into the European war. The responsibilities of the war and the rather determined stand of President Wilson against any intervention in Mexico ended for the time the clamor of the in-



terventionists. Mexico was permitted to go her way. President Carranza shifted as rapidly as he could from the "pre-constitutional" manner of government to that of civic administration. His presidential term was to count from the first of December 1916 and thus to end on the same date in 1920. The four-year limit had again been restored. The several states held their elections for governors and legislatures, and members of a new Federal congress were duly chosen.

The new constitution had aimed in several ways to restore equilibrium among the three branches of the government, in particular to make the Congress as well as the executive a factor in public control. But the two houses as newly constituted were made up almost wholly of inexperienced men, many of them young men. The whole of the constitution was in need of statutory regulation. Almost every bill brought in for this purpose was the signal for interminable debating. Constructive legislation moved so slowly that the legislators themselves grew weary of their task and began to desert and neglect the sittings. Many of them found the pleasure resorts of the capital city more engrossing than the legislative halls.

Three kinds of bills were especially urgent. An election law had to be devised to meet, if possible, the revolutionary demand for "effective suffrage." Labor laws were equally imperative, and provisions for the national revenue could not be delayed. Land laws, petroleum legislation, provisions for public education were in the offing, all urgently required.

But Congress debated and debated. Though the members were nearly all of the dominant party, lines of cleavage began to appear, usually on the basis of personal issues, and in default of an opposition the Constitutionalist party saw itself broken up into antagonistic and warring groups. The President had issued an *ad interim* decree governing oil. It was to the interest of the oil men, most of them Americans, as well as of Mexico that constitutional articles touching this important industry should be regulated by a statute. But getting a bill passed proved virtually impossible. The congressman who advocated measures that seemed favorable to the oil producers was attacked by his opponents as anti-Mexican, most of the producers being foreigners, whereas a drastic application of the constitution looked so much like confiscation that it was sure to meet strenuous opposition. The attempt to legislate on this subject was finally given up.

So matters stood as the Carranza administration drew toward its close.

## CHAPTER IX

### OBREGÓN

AGAIN, and for the fourth successive time, our chapter heading is the name of a man. Díaz, Madero, Carranza, Obregón—the manner in which these held in turn the center of the Mexican stage seems to warrant using their names as standing each for a segment of their country's history. And thus to employ names of men as symbols for historical periods is but to follow the characteristic trend of Latin American public affairs. In Mexico, and not less in the other republics lying to the south of her, politics is always more a matter of leaders than of principles. Patriotic slogans and catchwords there are, as a rule, in plenty. But they weigh little in the balance over against the imperious will of some popular hero and the dog-like devotion to him of his retainers. This fidelity upon the part of the rank and file, of soldiers especially, is one of the most outstanding traits of the Mexican people. Yet the Mexican has the reputation of being treacherous! As a matter of fact, he is almost criminally loyal.

General Obregón, who overthrew Carranza in the summer of 1920, had less pretext for violent action than any other successful Mexican leader for many decades past. Even though he saw the way blocked to his attaining the presidency at the approaching election, the country was at peace, he was young

still and had no issue of politics or public welfare on which to stand. He might well have bided his time for another four years.

Carranza, loyal to the principle of "no reëlection," had announced that he would not accept another term. He might justly have hesitated. His term had not been fully a constitutional one, due to the slow transition from military to civic control. He had never thought of himself as a soldier, his interests being primarily civilian. And the country still lacked much of being restored to a state of quiet. He had solved the money problem, and the national revenues were beginning to give promise of balancing the budget. He had about finished clearing the country-side of bandits—an achievement for which Obregón later received the credit. The effects of it did not become apparent till after Carranza's death. His post-revolutionary work was really just getting under way. But he chose to abide by the letter of the law.

Toward the end of Carranza's term there had begun to develop the not unusual rift between the President and Congress. A considerable number of the deputies and senators were, at that time, young men who as army officers had served under Obregón. More than a year before the date of the presidential election, due in the summer of 1920, General Obregón, who had resigned his commission in the army, announced his candidacy for the presidency. For reasons which have never been fully disclosed, President Carranza disapproved of this course. The grounds which he gave were, first,

that he thought it inadvisable to start a political campaign so long in advance, and, secondly, that he had his heart set on being succeeded by a civilian.

Whether there were other influences at work does not appear. But even this measure of coldness on the part of the executive toward the aspirations of their idolized general served to throw the Obregón partisans in Congress into a state of violent hostility. Thenceforward they systematically blocked and harassed the President, the tension growing continually sharper. In the fall of 1919, Sr. Ignacio Bonillas, who had been a member of the Mexican-American Commission of 1916—to which attention will be given in a later chapter—and who later was made Mexican Ambassador at Washington, was nominated for the presidency by a political club at Querétaro. As a civilian and long a loyal supporter of President Carranza it soon became known that his campaign would be favored by the administration. This precipitated a serious situation. The President, in accord with his political principles, had insisted upon a free and open campaign. Obregón traversed the country from end to end making speeches that grew more and more acid. He and his friends charged that the President was making use of his office and even drawing upon public funds to promote the campaign of Bonillas, whom they ridiculed as a figurehead. Carranza's real purpose, they said, was to perpetuate himself in power.

For a time the matter was complicated by the candidacy of General Pablo González. The Obregón party alleged that Carranza had put him forward



first, but finding the people cold to him, abandoned him in favor of Bonillas. No proof of this has been forthcoming. But González, himself, finding that he was making no headway, withdrew from the race. The President was good enough to his old neighbor, who by this time was universally known as an inefficient soldier, to continue him in the army as a major general. About the only serious military campaign he had engaged in was a long-drawn attempt to put down the Zapatistas. This had been a failure until at last he succeeded by a most disreputable ruse in having Emiliano Zapata assassinated. With characteristic chivalry the Mexican people resented this "victory." It was openly charged, moreover, that he had become a very rich man, and that by methods pointed to as questionable.

General Plutarco Elías Calles was holding an important post in the Carranza cabinet. He was from Sonora and was an intimate friend of Obregón. Vexed at the President's evident intention to see that Obregón was defeated, Calles boldly charged his chief with using public funds to promote the candidacy of Bonillas, resigned his position, and returned to his native state of Sonora. Another friend of Obregón (who is also a native of Sonora), Adolfo de la Huerta, was at the time governor of that state. He and Calles immediately set to work to push the candidacy of Obregón. The attitude of Sonora began to take on the guise of rebellion. The President, in an ill-advised moment, announced that Federal troops would be sent into that state

"to preserve order." De la Huerta, the governor, protested, and when he found the President obdurate he and his state announced that they had severed relations with the Federal government. Calles was put at the head of the state troops, which were rapidly mobilized, as they had been when Huerta had overthrown and murdered Madero. This was in April of 1920.

By reason of these activities of his partisans and because of the increasing severity of his attacks on the government, Obregón was at last charged with sedition, and his arrest was ordered. He was at this time in Tampico. Believing that there was a plot against his life, he evaded arrest, rapidly made his way to Mexico City, and there publicly surrendered to the authorities. He was placed on parole and given the freedom of the city.

As the prospect of an armed conflict began to menace Carranza, his sole reliance was General González, then chief in command of the Federal zone and well equipped with men and munitions. But González proved as broken a reed for Carranza as Huerta had for Madero. Nobody knows with certainty what passed between the two men. It is affirmed by friends of Carranza that González, instead of coming promptly and whole-heartedly to the support of his chief, began to dicker. What should he get out of it? Would Carranza back him for the presidency? If not, what about money? How much could he count on?

Obregón, pretending again to believe that his life was in danger, disguised himself and fled the

city, taking refuge in the wild mountains of Guerrero, to the south. Chihuahua meantime had joined forces with Sonora, and the rebellion was growing. The old intermittent fever of armed uprising began once more to course in the country's veins, fomented everywhere by the unrestrained violence of Obregón partisans. The uprising, such as it was, was still confined to the far northwest. There were no bodies of hostile troops near the capital.

But Carranza, convinced, no doubt, that González was a traitor and would betray him, and aware besides of that chieftain's hopeless inadequacy, even if loyal, in a military duel with the invincible Obregón, seems to have lost his accustomed poise. His situation was growing difficult, to be sure, but it was as yet by no means desperate. There were no political issues at stake. Obregón's campaign was purely a personal one, and there was still time for efforts at adjustment and compromise. In any event, a duly constituted ruler, abiding in his capital, has a sort of moral stronghold. He represents the dignity and the honor of his nation.

Mexico City is, however, a weak military position. Since the days of Moctezuma it has never been successfully defended. Still, had Carranza acted with his accustomed vigor, had he promptly cashiered González, replacing him with a man in whom he had confidence, and appealed to the country to stand by its government, he probably would have had little to fear. Since he kept his own counsel and was himself soon silenced in death, the real motive for the course which he took may never be known.

Since the days of Santa Ana Vera Cruz had been a place of safety for hard-pressed Mexican rulers. It is withdrawn from the rest of the republic and easily defended from the land side. Its open port is a sure source of income, an avenue for securing arms and supplies, and a gateway of escape, once flight becomes the only recourse. Santa Ana retired to Vera Cruz often; Juárez twice made it his base, from there Porfirio Díaz launched his successful revolution, and already Carranza had twice betaken himself to that haven. Convinced that his position, if not yet desperate, soon would be, and in despair of any loyal support by the ten or twelve thousand troops under González, who had meantime withdrawn to Puebla, Carranza decided to move his government to Vera Cruz. In command there was General Cándido Aguilar, who had married one of the President's daughters. He had no reputation as a military commander, but could, of course, be counted on as absolutely loyal. Aguilar had his headquarters in Vera Cruz. Along the line of the railway to Mexico City, extending to where they touched the territory controlled by González, one of his subordinates, General Guadalupe Sánchez, had his troops distributed.

To move the whole government three hundred miles proved to be no small undertaking. Twenty-one trains were assembled, including the famous yellow presidential train so often used by Díaz. The President and his cabinet with their families, the Supreme Court, the Permanent Committee of Congress, a multitude of clerks and under secre-

taries, the official files and archives, a quantity of money in metal coins estimated at from twenty to one hundred millions of pesos, several thousand troops with equipment for aviation, artillery, supplies, etc.—all this hastily brought together and scattered through the various train units made a cumbersome caravan, ill adjusted to either rapid travel or military action. Two or three of the younger generals, notably Generals Murguía, Pérez and Mariel commanded the troops that had been embarked.

Disasters began almost before the caravan got under way. In Guadalupe, a suburb of Mexico City, several of the rear units of the series of trains were cut off by a cavalry attack. Among these was included a car loaded with workmen and tools who were, when necessary, to destroy the track in the rear of the movement to cut off pursuit by rail. This led to a disaster farther down the line, when a wild engine was sent careening down a steep grade to crash into the rear train, wrecking the artillery and aviation equipment.

This unexpected attack in Guadalupe proved to be the first of a series. Subordinate officers in the González army, hoping to ingratiate themselves later with Obregón, and with an eye meantime upon the rich loot which the train conveyed, began to harass it every few miles. The loyal troops in the convoy repeatedly beat them off, inflicting severe defeats. But the long caravan was again and again delayed. The terrible summer rains beat upon it, alternating with a no less terrible tropical sun, as



the trains moved down the steep grades to ever lower altitudes. The water and food supplies began to fail, and the situation of the civilian passengers grew critical. At last, however, they reached the zone commanded by General Sánchez, at whose hands they expected protection. Instead it developed at once that he too had gone over to Obregón. The troops of the convoy proved unequal to the mass of fresh soldiers which he threw against them. He slaughtered the defenders of the long array of helpless trains. The civilians and the women and children were thrown into a panic of fear and suffering. It was a colossal tragedy.

In the confusion the President and a few of his friends secured horses from the mounted officers and rode away into the rugged mountains toward the north and east. A small body of troops under General Mariel went along as escort. On the second day they met one Rodolfo Herrero, who, having been a subordinate of Peláez, the bandit chieftain who had long been in control of the oil regions just to the north of them, had recently surrendered to the government and been granted amnesty. He protested his loyalty, and General Mariel then went away in advance to prepare their way, leaving this so-called "General" Herrero as guide. This man insisted that they camp that night, May 20, at a little mountain village called Tlaxcalaltongo. Murguía who was then in command, did not like the look of things and protested; but it began to rain heavily, and they stopped. Herrero selected the hut in which Carranza was to sleep, accompanied

by several civilians and two or three soldiers. Toward morning firing began. There was a heavy fog and Murguía could not rally his men for defense. The attacking party proved to be Herrero's men. They had shot Carranza first through the walls of the hut, a flimsy structure of grass and reeds, then killing the guard at his door, had entered and made sure of their work, filling his body with bullets. His companions were made prisoners.

It was to the interest of everybody (except the overwhelmed partisans of the dead President) to cover up the responsibility for this bloody treason. That Herrero was only a tool was evident, but whether of Peláez or of a higher command was never ascertained. General Obregón, who had reappeared in Mexico City within twenty-four hours after the departure of Carranza, roundly denounced the murder and had the President's body brought back to the city and given honorable burial. That funeral was described by an eye witness as a moving scene. Without military or governmental accompaniments of any kind, the friends of the dead leader bore his body to the grave. A vast concourse of the common people, for whom he had so long labored, flowed like a silent sea along the streets and engulfed the cemetery. The long rays of the setting sun lighted up the scene as the body was lowered to its rest. Suddenly, as if by a common impulse, that great throng broke into the strains of the Mexican National Hymn, paying their last tribute to a great leader with the martial music that expresses their love of their native land.

Obregón had no official standing, but was tacitly recognized as the dominating figure. He represented precisely the same political principles that had been advocated by Carranza. There was thus no opening for an armed uprising to vindicate the dead President. González did not dare take the field against Obregón. He feared him personally, and recent weeks had shown that his subordinate officers were more inclined to adhere to Obregón than to him. He made futile gestures of compromising with the new leader, but was thenceforward ignored.

The Obregonista elements in the Congress quickly got that body together and reorganized it. Adolfo de la Huerta, the secessionist governor of Sonora, was chosen as provisional President. The attitude of the army toward Obregón kept the country at peace. During the summer congressional elections took place, the several states chose new governors, and the provisional President and his Cabinet got under way. At the September presidential election General Obregón was chosen practically without opposition and on December 1 began his term of office.

The oil operators, many of them foreigners, whose antagonism to Carranza because of certain provisions of the Constitution of 1917 had been an important influence in bringing about his overthrow, were propitiated by certain favorable but temporary decrees issued by De la Huerta during his brief term. Now that the government was reorganized, they began to press for legislation which should

define and apply the constitutional provisions relating to the oil industry.<sup>1</sup> But the Congress found this legislation a difficult task. The Obregón government had not yet been recognized by the United States, where a Republican administration had meantime come in, less idealistic than that of President Wilson and pledged especially to give protection to American interests in Mexico. Since the owners of oil wells held that their interests were invaded by the very terms of the Constitution, about the only kind of legislation which could be counted on to please them would be the virtual setting aside of that document. This, naturally, the Congress did not dare undertake.

The political elements that had united in support of Obregón began now to exhibit the usual tendency to cleavage. A considerable number of the men who had shared in the Carranza government still remained in places of influence, both in the Cabinet and in Congress. The administration of Obregón was as definitely "*Constitutionalista*" as had been that of his former Chief.

As has already been remarked, the elimination of banditry had been pretty well accomplished in the later months of Carranza's administration. There was one phase of the situation, however, with which that ill-fated President had found it difficult to deal. Many subordinate officers in the army were using their offices to enrich themselves. There was much corruption in handling even the payrolls and military supplies. Charges were freely made, also,

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<sup>1</sup>See pages 276, 277.

that squads of soldiers sent to pursue bandits preyed on the people more ruthlessly even than the outlaws. Some of these depredations were committed by deserters and by discharged soldiers who had managed to hold on to a battered uniform and a rifle. But that the army was in need of a thorough revision and reduction was evident. It had proportionately far too many officers, from general down, and was an intolerable burden financially.

But in view of the well-known fact that the army, officers and men, were more devoted to Obregón than to the civilian President, after the controversy between Carranza and his former leading general became acute, the President could not deal drastically with the army without imperiling his government. So many governments in that part of the world have been overthrown by army uprisings that the Spanish language has acquired an exact descriptive term. Such an uprising is called a *cuartelazo*, literally "a blow struck by the garrison," reminiscent of the ill-omened "Pretorianism" of classic Rome.

General Obregón as President was under no such restraint. His vigor and efficiency as a military leader was universally known. So, though without being at all drastic about it—he had to remember his friends—he began to reduce and reorganize the military establishment.

During the four years that he had been out of office he had been engaged on a rather large scale in business as a planter. He had traveled in the United States and established many contacts, mak-



ing a favorable impression. Without definitely committing himself, he had given American business interests to understand that in case of his obtaining a position of influence they would be treated with more consideration than they had received from Carranza. His advent as President was therefore generally welcomed. The questionable manner in which he reached the presidency was overlooked. There was then in the United States no President Wilson to challenge the bloody overthrow of a duly constituted Mexican government.

Yet American recognition was withheld, much to Obregón's embarrassment. Mr. Hughes, Secretary of State, tried to secure, as a condition precedent to such recognition, the framing of a treaty between the two countries in which provision should be made for the protection of American citizens and their investments. But since the effort to pass a statute in regard to the development of the petroleum industry had disclosed the fact that some of these interests objected to the new Constitution itself, the Mexican President was afraid to venture upon such an expedient. He knew too well the temper of his countrymen on that point. Probably he had also a degree of personal pride. He argued that it would be humiliating to seem to buy recognition by making promises concerning matters that ought to be taken for granted among civilized nations.

So the situation drifted along for several months. Meantime outside business interests were doing, some negotiating on their own account. The foreign

debt of Mexico, including the obligations of the railways which had been taken over by the government, was in a state of chaos. Interest on the various bond issues was long in arrears, and the bondholders, some in Europe and some in the United States, were anxious for an adjustment. Adolfo de la Huerta, after his term as provisional President, had been given the treasury portfolio in the Cabinet of Obregón. The foreign bankers organized a commission to take up with him the matter of reorganizing and refunding the debt. The plan they offered was accepted by him, largely on the terms formulated by the commission, much to his own satisfaction, but to the scorn of his Mexican fellow citizens, who were sure that he had been duped. They rightly held him to be an opinionated and inexperienced young man, with no training or natural ability to fit him for financial negotiations on so large a scale. The Obregón government, however, accepted the settlement and began at once to make provision for resuming the payment of interest on these obligations. As a matter of fact, the settlement seems to have been a fair and reasonable one, as favorable to Mexico as could justly have been hoped for.

The Harding government, recognizing by this time the hopelessness of its treaty proposition, made another. This was to form a joint commission, which, representing the two governments, should informally talk over and, as far as possible, smooth out the points of disagreement and thus clear the way for the resumption of diplomatic relations. The offer was promptly accepted by Mexico, and the American

Commissioners, Messrs. Charles B. Warren and John B. Payne, went to Mexico in May of 1923. After three months' deliberation they and the two Mexican Commissioners at last reached a basis of agreement, and upon their report the government of the United States extended recognition to that of Mexico. Ambassadors were appointed and regular diplomatic relations were resumed. Events of the next few months were to prove that this relief came to Obregón none too soon.

As the presidential term 1920-24 drew toward its close, interest began to be centered on the next campaign. Who was to succeed Obregón? The President himself was thought to be committed to General Calles. They were warm personal friends. Calles held an important post in the Cabinet of Obregón, as he had formerly in that of Carranza. He had proved himself to be an uncommonly able administrator. Like Obregón, a native of the progressive State of Sonora, and like him also a man of the people, of the middle rather than the privileged class, he had strongly reënforced his chief in the progressive policies called for under the Constitution of 1917. Now, making no concealment of his ambition, he resigned from the Cabinet to organize and conduct his campaign.

Meantime, though on the surface all was serene, there were fires of discontent that smoldered, growing hotter and hotter. The privileged classes, that had fomented the rebellion of Huerta against Madero and of Villa against Carranza, had not yet given up. As Obregón, not very vigorously, to be

sure, yet loyally and consistently, began to carry into effect certain objectives of the economic revolution that had expressed itself in the Madero-Carranza uprising and in the Constitution of 1917, those whose traditional status and perquisites were invaded once more looked about for means of stemming the flood.

The agrarian question was the touchstone. It had two phases. One was the promise made to abrogate those laws of the Díaz *régime* which by depriving villages and towns of their communal lands had changed the status of millions of farm laborers from that of independent poverty as villagers to that of serfdom on the great landed estates. The other was the specific provision, inserted in the Constitution itself, for the breaking up of such of these estates as had assumed proportions inimical to the public welfare. These latter provisions involved, to meet varying conditions of agricultural lands, action by the several state legislatures. In one state the maximum size of an hacienda might well be considerably larger than would be permissible in another. But almost immediately it developed, as might indeed have been anticipated, that the state legislatures were incompetent to deal with so intricate a problem. State officials were venal and ineffective, and the state bonds to be offered in case of expropriation were utterly unacceptable. So that wheel became hopelessly mired.

There remained the restoration of the village *ejidos*. This, though wholly in the hands of the Federal government, was found even more compli-

cated in its practical workings than the reduction of the oversized haciendas. In a later chapter (see below, Chapter X) the matter is gone into somewhat fully. In brief, it involved the expropriation, in order to gratify the demands of the Indian villagers, of lands the titles to which had often gone through several hands and were usually held by the wealthy class, who were altogether hostile to the government's program.

The government was in a dilemma. There are millions of these villagers, and they were thoroughly aroused. They held up the promise of the revolution as proclaimed by Madero and Carranza and even embodied in the Constitution which President Obregón had sworn to enforce. Every consideration, not merely of honor, but even of political self-interest, urged the chief executive on. He was obliged at least to make a beginning of this work of restoring *ejidos*. On the other hand, he was jealously watched by the still powerful party of wealth and privilege. Defeated under Díaz and again under Huerta, these people had never given up. They had held on to their wealth, and money is power. They decided if possible to scotch this menace to their interests in its very beginning.

At this juncture fortune threw their way an unexpected ally. Just when and how Adolfo de la Huerta, his Secretary of the Treasury, began to be disloyal to President Obregón cannot be ascertained. No sooner had Calles launched his candidacy to succeed his chief than he was made the object of violent opposition, the general source of which was



not difficult to identify. "At once every force of greed, discontent, and reaction grew clamant—*hacendados*, bitter against Obregón's land policy, international financiers, fearful of Calles and his honesty, 'generals,' unwilling to be retired to private life, grafters, kicked out of office, joined in the attack."<sup>1</sup> It transpired that those who so violently opposed Calles were favoring de la Huerta. Although he had not announced himself a candidate, his name began to be put forward in contrast to Calles. Before he should formally enter the race the law required that he resign his portfolio. This he did at last, in September of 1923.

Alberto J. Pani, appointed as his successor, found an astounding situation. Telegrams began to pour in from New York charging Obregón with bad faith in not meeting a current payment of interest on the bonds, under the terms solemnly agreed to in the settlement of a few months earlier. Investigation disclosed the fact that the money had been duly situated in New York, but had later been drawn out by the Mexican Secretary of the Treasury. Not only that, but the comfortable margin that should have been in the Mexican treasury itself had been completely dissipated. For months Obregón's trusted subordinate had been looting his country's strong box. What had been done with the money?

The only clue is to be found in the events of the next few weeks. De la Huerta, when Pani's report was issued, loudly complaining that the whole business was a conspiracy designed to wreck his

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<sup>1</sup>George Creel, "The People Next Door," page 364.

candidacy for the office of President, all in the interest of that of Calles, slipped out of the City to Vera Cruz. There he was received with open arms by General Guadalupe Sánchez, the man whose treason had wrecked Carranza's hopes and cost him his life. Obregón, who had allowed a man capable of such conduct to continue in a place of honor, was being paid in his own coin. Sánchez immediately "pronounced" against the government, proclaiming Adolfo de la Huerta as the new apostle of all that was good for Mexico.

Thereupon the fruits of the free sowing of his country's money at once appeared. General after general, in all parts of the country, each one seizing the troops and munitions under his command, made haste to adhere to the uprising. Almost in a day the military support upon which Obregón had ridden into power crumbled beneath him. He was confronted again with the situation which under Carranza he had faced when in 1914 Villa drew off into rebellion practically the entire army.

If the carelessness which had allowed the peculations of his Secretary of the Treasury to go on for months undetected and even unsuspected may be taken as a measure of Obregón's ineffectiveness in civil administration, the vigor and skill with which he met in the field this armed insurrection but adds to his reputation as a soldier.

Fortunately for him, public sentiment in Mexico was becoming at last a reality and not a mere fiction. The masses of citizenry discerned instantly that they were face to face once more with their old

enemy, a venal professional soldiery. They were not clear as to just who had bought the army, but they knew that money had done the mischief and that they were again menaced with the loss of even the scanty and dear-bought liberties that had come to them. They flocked in thousands to the standard of their government. Calles gave up his presidential campaign and took once more his commission as a general. The few loyal units in the army were rallied and reorganized. The President took personal command.

His first and greatest problem was that of arms and munitions. Greatly to his chagrin, no doubt, he was obliged to appeal to the United States. The reward of his belated recognition by that government was at once apparent. "In view of the importance of stability and orderly constitutional procedure in the neighboring republic," his request that he be allowed to buy arms was granted, and the shipments began to pour across the border, which was still under his control. Calles, popular with the labor and agrarian elements—for which he had been roundly abused as a socialist, a bolshevist, and what not—called on these workers to rally to the support of the President, and they came in thousands.

The rebels held the South of the republic as well as the rich West. Their headquarters were at Vera Cruz on the east, the country's principal port. Mexico City was almost isolated. But they had not yet concentrated, and they made the fatal mistake of delaying. First of all Obregón seized Puebla,

thus cutting off Vera Cruz from the forces in the South and West. Then, so soon as he felt strong enough, he bore down upon Sánchez in Vera Cruz. Feinting first against Estrada, who held Guadalajara in the West, he concentrated his forces in the East and in January of 1924 met Sanchez at Esperanza, half way down the long slope. To this disloyal subordinate and his superior forces he administered a sound defeat and pressing upon his heels, seized every remaining stronghold till he appeared February 5 before Vera Cruz itself. De la Huerta and his "Cabinet" stood not upon the order of their going, but promptly took ship for Tabasco. The customary amnesty was granted to rebellious soldiers who laid down their arms, but Obregón bluntly announced that all leaders of the rebellion would be shot if taken.

Hurrying back to the West, in a desperate battle at Ocotlán he defeated Estrada (the same Estrada who was recently convicted in California of plotting against the government of Calles) and smashed his army to bits. A little later he dealt with Oaxaca in the South, capturing and executing several disloyal generals, old companions of his, including the governor of the state. This was the end. In an unprovoked and inexcusable rebellion Generals Maycotte, Figueroa, Alvarado, Diéguez, Cavazos and others, well known as leaders in the Constitutionalist movement, faced firing squads. They had not been able to place the welfare of their country above their personal greed and ambition.

That the De la Huerta rebellion was amply

financed was evident from the beginning. In addition to the millions which its leader filched from the public treasury, other millions proved to be available. Just who contributed them cannot be certainly known. In Mexico there is no doubt that they came from the groups that had ten years before financed Huerta in his overthrow of Madero. De la Huerta is looked upon as the tool of the privileged classes, the "*científicos*" of the Díaz period and their eternal ally, the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Church in Mexico has always possessed ample funds, and it has never been slow to use them when its leaders thought their interests were involved. Whether any foreign investors, oil men or others, risked their contributions in support of De la Huerta is a matter that has not been divulged. Probably they did not, although their attitude toward the policies of the Constitutionalist party has always been hostile, and there have been few moments since the days of Madero when they would not willingly have seen that group displaced.



## CHAPTER X

### THE CHURCH PROBLEM AND THE LAND PROBLEM

BEFORE taking up, in a concluding chapter, the course of Mexican affairs from the close of the Obregón administration to the time of the present writing, with special attention to that country's relations with the United States, there are two or three matters which, though already touched upon here and there, seem to demand a more detailed study. These are the part played in Mexico's development by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the manner in which the agrarian question has been intertwined with all phases of the country's affairs, and the history, contents, and significance of Mexico's various Constitutions, especially that of 1917.

Two excellent monographs have recently appeared (in English) on the land question.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, an equally valuable and authoritative volume is now available on the Church question. This is "Church and State in Mexico," by Professor W. H. Calcott, of the University of South Carolina.

The Roman Catholic Church was, at the time of the conquest of Mexico, closely welded with the government of Spain. The long struggle against the Moors in Spain had taken the guise of a religious

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<sup>1</sup> McBride, G. M., "The Land Systems of Mexico," and Phipps, H., "Some Aspects of the Agrarian Question in Mexico."

war. It was the Cross against the Crescent. Not that Spain was so preëminently a Christian nation. The religious motive was a convenient and plausible label for other interests, economic mainly, which led to a protracted and bitter conflict. Spain was implacable in her determination to repel the foreign invaders. Yet it seems to be the verdict of history that the Moors had brought to the Iberian peninsula a civilization distinctly superior to any that it threatened to displace. And in those provinces where they had established themselves the invaders, though remaining consistently Moslem, were amiably tolerant of the religion of their native subjects. It took a good deal of whipping up of the fanaticism of the Christians to keep the war spirit alive.

It is axiomatic that a Christianity evolved as a military asset is far from ideal as a religion. War is a hard and hardening business. It may be made to minister to spiritual growth, but normally it does not. More often it develops rather the brutal side of human nature. Religion that is a war measure runs thus the risk of becoming itself hard and superficial. To have the cross inscribed on its banners has not been found to safeguard an army against indulging in cruelty, treachery, and rapine.

Emerging from the defeat of the Moors, Spain entered upon the conquest of Mexico. The Church was at her side. When other pretexts for aggression failed, there was the missionary motive. Converts were to be made, subjects added to the realm of the "Christian kings" of Spain, which, of course, it was assumed, meant that they entered also the kingdom

of heaven. The tolerance by the Church of inhuman cruelties and of bloody treacheries in warfare was of a piece with its mechanical conception of "conversion." The unenlightened and puzzled Indian had but to allow a monk to sprinkle a bit of water on his head, muttering meanwhile unintelligible words in a strange tongue, and lo, he was forthwith "a Christian." He soon found that the ceremony was painless and seemingly harmless. Besides, it brought with it certain tangible material gains. So the Indians were baptized by the million. They became docile servants and followers of the missionaries, who accepted as a matter of course the material overlordship which came to them along with the spiritual. The missions, however, as conducted by the monks, especially those in remote sections, were usually handled with an eye to the welfare of the Indians.

But meantime the cities were filling up with immigrants from Spain and with the sons and daughters of the mixed marriages. Parishes were organized, dioceses and archiepiscopal provinces were laid out, and the administration of even the remote missions was taken from the religious orders and placed in the hands of the secular or parish clergy. This was not only a death blow to the spiritual well-being of the missions, which from that moment began to decay, but was the ushering in of an era of wealth and pride for the Church. Her leaders received princely salaries, the government taxed the people for her support, she became a landowner and a money lender. As being among the enlightened citizens of the colony, her bishops were often called

upon to occupy high civic offices, not a few even of the viceroys having been members of the clergy.

Thus the temper and training of the Church hierarchy combined with the political situation in New Spain to solidify not merely the political power of the Church, but the spirit of pride and of worldliness which had grown rather than waned by its transfer from Spain to the New World. Three hundred years of colonial administration, during which the Church had not merely the recognition and protection of the state, but its active coöperation, especially in the granting of lands and in the collection of tithes, inevitably confirmed it in its position of power and influence. In addition to the tithes received from the taxation offices of the government, it collected enormous sums in fees for services rendered by the clergy, in alms, by the sale of indulgences, and in bequests. Many of these were gifts made on their deathbed by men and women anxious to purchase repose for their souls and to shorten their term in purgatory. Forced labor on the part of the peasantry that happened to inhabit their large estates, and even of villagers, who thus hoped to increase their spiritual merit, erected the major part of the massive buildings which even yet remain as monuments to this epoch of the Church's day of prestige. Most even of the material entering into these structures was also freely given, under the pressure that the spiritual advisers of the people were able to bring to bear.

By the time Mexico became an independent nation, and began to cast about for a method and ba-

sis of self-government, the Church, including the monastic orders, owned not less than one-third of all the productive real estate in the country. Through loans of money, secured by mortgages, the clergy controlled in addition a considerable proportion of what passed as private property, especially in the form of haciendas. It is conservatively estimated that in these two forms the power of the clergy was exercised over fully one-half of the country's real estate. Both their real estate and their invested funds were wholly exempt from taxation, whereas outside the cost of maintaining the government the ordinary citizen had to pay in taxes a tenth of his income to support the Church.

In addition to exemption from taxation and the collection for it of the tithe along with other taxes, the government extended recognition to the Church in still another form. The clergy, regular and secular, with most ecclesiastical functionaries and employees, were freed of amenability to the civil courts. In case of crime or misdemeanor they were, as we have seen, tried by their own tribunals (*fueros*). Under the *régime* of the Roman Catholic Church the hierarchy in Mexico was, of course, a close-knit organization. Its chiefs, the archbishops of the five "provinces," received princely salaries, its accumulated funds were enormous, its annual income considerably in excess of that of the government, its social position superior to that of any other organization, and its access to the whole population, from the rich hacendados to the humblest peon, from the merchant prince to the filthy *lépero*, was



instant and authoritative. By common consent the whole task of education had been left in its hands. The government subsidized some of its educational institutions, but made no move to set up any of its own.

Independence from Spain was finally secured, as has been shown, by the adherence to that cause of the clericals. When in 1820 the liberal movement in Spain forced the hand of Ferdinand VII and he restored the constitution of 1812, the Church leaders in Mexico saw their special privileges and their unchallenged power threatened. So they used Iturbide to make terms with the ragged patriots who for ten years had been fighting for independence. Those terms included independence, but not the sort for which Hidalgo and Morelos had stood and for which Guerrero was still fighting. What the clerical leaders really designed was to perpetuate the monarchical system, persuading Ferdinand, if they could, to come and reign in Mexico. The Spanish king, however, a typical Bourbon, would not take the bait; so their first design against the newly won liberty of Mexico was thwarted.

Nor would the "empire" of Iturbide, which was soon substituted, *march*. The Mexican people were tired of kings. But the Catholic hierarchy has continued the implacable foe of democratic institutions. So long as they dared—for over forty years—they clung to the idea of a monarchy. In despair of that, they have, since the death of Maximilian in 1867, used their enormous wealth, their privileged position, their intellectual and spiritual control over the

masses to oppose singly, in detail and in mass, every one of those principles which lie at the base of successful self-government. They have hindered education by the state. They have opposed liberty of thought, of conscience, of the press. They have resisted equality before the courts. They have been against enlightened and equitable taxation, the betterment of labor conditions, agrarian reform, municipal control of cemeteries, sane marriage laws, liberty of worship, republican institutions of every description.

This intransigent attitude was not at first clearly recognized. But the perspective of a hundred years makes it now manifest. Professor Calcott's review of the conflict between the Church leaders and the advocates of free institutions closes with the adoption of the constitution of 1857, which was, seemingly, the complete triumph of the patriotic party. But in McBride's and Phipps' study of agrarian reform, in Rippy's review of relations between the United States and Mexico, in works of a general character, such as those of Rives, Trowbridge, Bell, Beals, and Creel, and in the historical studies of Smith and Priestley, the reader will be able constantly to pick up instances of this attitude. During the entire century of Mexico's political freedom, amid the shifting and only too often bloody panorama of her endeavor to stabilize her civic and economic affairs, can be detected, ever in the background, often vaguely obscured if not deliberately veiled, standing ominously behind every reactionary leader, every dictator or usurper, every party of privilege and

retrogression, the black-robed, secretive, astute, united, unyielding body of the higher clergy.

In 1824, when the first constitution was adopted, there were many unsettled questions. Differences of opinion were natural over such issues as, Shall Mexico be a republic or some kind of a monarchy? If a republic, should it be a federation of more or less independent units, or a centralized system, heading up into one source of control? Is the division into legislative, executive, and judicial powers a sound one? What kind of suffrage is best, universal or restricted? How can a people who have had no training in democratic methods be taught to govern themselves? In the presence of ninety per cent and more of illiteracy is it likely that any kind of popular control can be enforced? If not, who will take control, and how? A congress? A military chieftain? A recognized dictator? And who will assume responsibility for educating the people, for laying this appalling phantom of illiteracy and ignorance? Then there were the land situation, the caste system, peonage, the race issue—all fraught with danger and clamoring for attention. And how, finally, was sufficient revenue for government of any kind to be secured?

In the presence of problems like these it is not surprising that the framers of the first constitution should have overlooked the menace to democracy to be found in a proud, rich, privileged, spiritual aristocracy, masquerading as a Christian Church. So, to all appearances without suspicion or objection, the new constitution, otherwise modeled largely

upon that of the United States, embodied the legal recognition of a monopolistic and protected state Church. It took forty-three years of struggle and bloodshed to open the eyes of political leaders sufficiently to blot from the constitution the affirmation that "the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic religion is the religion of the nation, and no other will be tolerated."

The position of the Mexican hierarchy was strengthened rather than weakened by the independence of Mexico. The country had been devastated, and many private citizens had been impoverished. The government itself was bankrupt from the beginning of its independent existence. But the funds, the buildings, and the broad acres of the Church were intact. Its wealth had even appreciated. Its income was actually greater than that of the government. Moreover, it had itself received a sort of charter of independence. By a special concession of the Vatican Spain had exercised control of the Church patronage. This subordinated, in some degree, at least, the hierarchy to the state. Now that Spain's hand had been thrown off, the Pope declined to make similar terms with the independent government. Thenceforward the hierarchy in Mexico was responsible directly to him and in no sense dependent on the Mexican civil authorities. The consciousness of this independence of position has been an important element in the attitude of Mexican Churchmen from that day to this.

From the beginning of the modern period many Mexican citizens allowed themselves to be persuaded that the special privileges of the clergy (*fueros*) were

an essential part of the Christian religion. On every occasion, therefore, when those advantages were threatened by some new advocacy of the equality of all citizens before the law, the cry of "*¡Religión y fueros!*" was sure to be raised. It came to be a sort of standard motto of the clerical or conservative party. (In Mexico the two words have always meant the same.) Since the one other special group to enjoy *fueros* was the army, nothing was more natural than that Church and army should usually find themselves thinking and acting together. In the course of time it was found that this union could always, when necessary, be advanced by a free use of the Church's ever ready treasure. Soldiers were poorly paid, at best, by the government, and even these slender wages were often in arrears. The results of this situation, as may easily be imagined, explain not a few armed uprisings in Mexico, from that of Bustamente in 1829 to that of De la Huerta in 1924, not to mention the armed bands which as these lines are written the Calles government is pursuing, *a salto de mata*, in the mountains of Talisco and Michoacán.

The resistance which the clergy put up to the constitution of 1857, which had swept away their *fueros*, brought on "the Three Years War," one of the bloodiest in Mexico's history. The lines were the same as forty years before, the republicans on one side and the rich landholders and still richer clergy, backed by a professional soldiery, on the other. Juárez, who from the presidency of the Supreme Court had come into the place of Chief



Executive when Ignacio Comonfort, unwilling to face the rising storm, had taken refuge in the United States, saw promptly what was the one means of breaking the hold of the clergy. This was to deprive them of their surplus property. Tentative moves in this direction had been made on several previous occasions, once as early as 1833. That clear-eyed and sturdy republican, Valentín Gómez Farías, at that time acting President, had proposed that the idle funds of the Church be used for the urgent needs of the government. The bare proposal raised such a storm that Santa Ana, who was President, but was taking a vacation, abandoned his pretended liberal principles and annulled the decrees of Farías. From that time forward he was hailed as the "protector" of the Church.

On certain other occasions the hierarchy were forced to make either contributions or loans in considerable sums. It began to be generally noted that they were the only people who through all the troubles had held on to their wealth. Rich citizens could be taxed, but the Church was exempt. While everybody else, including the government, grew poorer and poorer, a situation especially notable about the time (1847) of the disastrous war with the United States, the Church got richer and richer. Juárez, therefore, in the year 1859, in the midst of the war waged to establish the new constitution, promulgated by executive decree the Reform Laws (*Leyes de Reforma*). These swept away the entire holdings of the Church in real estate and real estate loans, the government taking over this property.

Henceforth Churches were to own no real estate except such as was needed for public worship. Their other properties, it was declared, belonged by right to the people, since they had been paid for by their fees and tithes and, if houses, built by their unrequited labor. The nation would therefore take them over and use the proceeds for its urgent necessities.

These laws, which in 1874 were duly reënacted by Congress as amendments to the constitution, were a body blow to the clergy. Could the civil strife have been made any more bitter than it had already become, this act of the government would have made it worse. Drastic as this step was, the reader who has followed the story of independent Mexico up to this point will probably be ready to agree that nothing short of what Juárez did could have met the case. The effects of the control of from one-third to one-half the wealth of a country by the hierarchy of a Church supposedly organized for spiritual concerns, but firmly addicted also to political activities, were so disastrous alike to the country and to the Church that the sooner an end was put to that state of things the better. Even the Catholic Emperor, Maximilian, who some three or four years later was brought to Mexico as an ally of the Church, refused to abrogate the *Leyes de Reforma*.

Naturally, there was much confusion and not a little corruption in the effort to transfer the values of the vast holdings of the clergy to the treasury of the nation. Juárez, a sincere friend of agriculture and of the poor citizen, cherished the hope that this would be the beginning of the breaking up of the

overgrown landed estates—*latifundia*—and would mark at the same time the general development of the independent, land-holding small farmer. To promote this even further the constitution—over the framing of which he had exerted a good deal of influence—ordered the breaking up also of the community holdings of the towns and villages, in order that the citizens might enter upon the experience of owning in severalty each his own land. This measure proved to be premature. The Indian farmers were not ready for it. Besides, not a few of the Church properties fell into the hands of speculators and adventurers, or were bought back under cover of an agent by the clergy or by individual clerics. Nevertheless, a considerable gain was made in stimulating the holding of land in smaller units, and meantime the chief means of making mischief in political affairs was taken out of the hands of the clergy

During the later years of the long administration of President Díaz, when he had become virtually a dictator and democratic practices were in abeyance, the provisions of the Reform Laws were relaxed, and in the midst of the general prosperity the hierarchy got back not a little of its wealth, in real estate and otherwise. So menacing did this fact, along with the general belief that the clergy had contributed liberally to the Huerta uprising which had overthrown Madero, seem to the constitutional convention of 1916 that not only were all the *Leyes de Reforma* taken up and incorporated in the new instrument which that body framed, but much was

added to them. About every drastic proposal that during a hundred years of conflict opponents of the reactionary stand of the clergy had put forward was gathered up and made a part of the new organic law. It proposed simply to sweep the Church leaders out of politics. Their wealth is taken away, their dress is dictated, they are deprived of their citizenship, their teaching function is rigidly restrained, their very livings and parishes are placed under the control of the civil authorities, and the church edifices, along with other real estate, are nationalized.

It is not to be wondered at that they are now among the implacable foes of the constitution of 1917 and of the government that has sworn to uphold it. As this is written they are staging a final and desperate battle, backed by the Vatican and loyally reinforced by their fellow churchmen in the United States. Whoever anywhere and in any way, from the rich oil operators in London and New York to the smugglers on the border, from the Secretary of State in Washington to the Mexican bandit who robs trains and assaults travelers under the guise of "revolution," seeks to weaken or to overthrow the present government of Mexico, is a partner of the Pope and of the Mexican clergy, and if success comes to the effort will be forced to share with them the fruits of victory.

Some space must now be devoted to that other traditional foe of democracy in Mexico, the large landholder. The clergy, as we have seen, were landholders, but there were and are many others. The agrarian problem of Mexico has not in the past so

often figured in politics, but it is no less serious than the Church problem, in essence perhaps even more serious. To it the present government, under the constitution of 1917, is rightly giving earnest attention.

The land provisions of the constitution of 1917 have two objectives. One is to solve, if possible, the hoary problem of *latifundios*. There are too many large haciendas, and many of them are too big. Most of them originated in land grants of the Spanish crown. Originally, and up to the middle of the nineteenth century, these were entailed. Immediately after the conquest began the system of *encomiendas* or *repartimientos*. The two terms were not at first interchangeable. Both, however, referred not primarily to the land, but to the people. These natives of Mexico were "intrusted" (*encomendados*) or "distributed" (*repartidos* in *repartimientos*) to Christian overlords, to be civilized and Christianized. As this process came to be carried out it soon resolved itself into their becoming serfs on the lands which had been theirs, the ownership now passing to the "Christian" master who took this method of evangelizing and civilizing them. The plan was meant to be one of mandates, but the Spanish landlords saw in it only a means of becoming proprietors of wide acres of fertile land, tilled by the faithful toilers intrusted to them, a surer road to wealth and power than adventuring in gold or silver mining or seeking other realms to conquer. The system was productive of so much abuse of the Indians, and resulted in such repeated and vehement



protests by fair-minded observers, that before the end of a century it was by royal decree abolished. By that time, however, the mandatories had become proprietors, and in many instances their heirs and assignees are to this day holding the same rich and far too large estates, long ago thus acquired.

The plan for reducing all these large land holdings to a legal maximum, as laid down in the last constitution, seems simple enough. Each state is to declare by legislative act what that maximum shall be within its borders, and any proprietors who now own more shall be given a reasonable time in which to dispose of their surplus. If they fail to act, the state itself shall condemn and sell, and open to homesteading, the excess in acreage. Due mostly to the weakness and inefficiency of the state governments, the plan is not working well. It may have to be taken over and readjusted by the Federal government.

The other object sought is to restore communal lands to small towns and villages, especially of Indians. This deep-rooted system, derived in part from Indian customs of pre-Spanish days and in part from a similar condition in Castile, was considered too antiquated for a modern republic. Hence Juárez among the rest of his reforms undertook, as we have seen, to abolish it. In this he was followed later by Díaz. It was thought that the Indians would make better citizens if taught to own their lands in severalty, and so the communal holdings were largely broken up. But the Indians could not grasp the new way of doing things, and in a short

while they had become the victims of shrewd traders, often the owner of a neighboring hacienda, who had got possession of all their land.

These village holdings had consisted of *ejidos*, or village commons, *proprios*, or cultivated lands, rented year by year for the benefit of the community, and *montes*, that is woodlands, for pasturage, wood for fuel, and lumber for building. This was the recognized order of things in Spain, and many new Spanish *pueblos* and *villas* were established in Mexico, having communal lands of these three classes assigned to them. At the same time the aboriginal village communes of the Indians were recognized and with slight modifications adopted into the system.

Beginning with Carranza, the Constitutionalists in Mexico have set about remedying the harm previously done in the effort to break up these village communities. It was seen that the total result of the regulations put in force by Juárez and Díaz was to leave the formerly independent villagers no means of making a living except to become farm peons on some neighboring hacienda. Their lands meantime had probably already been joined to those of the hacienda, had fallen into the hands of a lumber company, or been entered as mining claims. In many instances the titles had repeatedly changed hands. To unravel this snarl, to satisfy the villagers by giving them back the identical lands of their ancestors and at the same time so to deal with the more recent proprietors as to keep reclamations and recriminations upon the lowest possible level, has been found no easy task. The Calles government

has, however, laid a firm grip on it, to the uncontrolled delight of the villagers. Unfortunately, one of the most serious obstacles it has encountered has been the resistance of American citizens and other foreigners who in the course of trade have become proprietors of some of these desired *ejidos*. (This word, originally specific, as explained above, is now usually employed for all kinds of communal lands.) The special point of resistance seems to be the necessity which the Mexican government is under of paying for condemned lands in bonds, while the American proprietors, seemingly backed by their government, demand cash.

Nothing else, however, that has ever been undertaken in Mexico since that country became an independent nation has so aroused the interest of the submerged classes of its people. It has brought about something approaching a real public sentiment. Observers of Mexico ever since the days of Humboldt have been pointing out the evils of a system which makes of nine-tenths of the agricultural population either serfs or tenant farmers. It would seem nothing short of a real calamity should the government now, for any reason, be forced to abandon even this one phase of its endeavor to give a small measure of economic freedom and opportunity to that immense mass of Mexican citizens whose poverty and ignorance are at once the reproach of the country and its greatest hindrance to becoming a prosperous and self-sustaining nation.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CONSTITUTION OF 1917

It is now about one hundred years since the various countries of what is loosely called Latin America, formerly colonies of Spain or Portugal or France, settled down to the task of governing themselves. The Monroe Doctrine was promulgated in 1823. At that time Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile and various smaller Spanish colonial units had achieved their independence. Peru, last stronghold of Spain on the continent, was slipping from the grasp of the mother country.

The statement put out by President Monroe and Secretary Adams to the effect that the United States would not welcome the further intervention of any European power in America was not intended primarily to bolster up the new-found and as yet precarious independence of these southern countries. It was first of all a matter of self-preservation. Republicanism, even in these former British colonies, was a tender plant. If somewhere in the New World a monarchy should be set up under European culture and should flourish, some who were only loosely attached to the principle of self-government might be won away.

The danger was by no means wholly imaginary. Popular government was at the moment everywhere exposed to an envenomed attack. Following the

outburst of democracy which so generally succeeded the downfall of Napoleon, the self-styled "Holy" Alliance, of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France made no concealment of its purpose to wipe out every liberal movement in Europe and to follow that by an invasion of the New World designed to restore the revolting Spanish colonies to their senses. It was that threat that stirred President Monroe to action. His pronouncement has come to be called a "doctrine." It is, and was, rather a warning and a challenge. As such it stands to this day—marking, incidentally, the first breach in that wall of isolation which so many fancy was, and should continue to be, set up between our country and Europe.

Monroe's pronouncement not only achieved his primary object, but incidentally served well the revolted Spanish colonies. It is doubtful whether the feeble Spanish King, Ferdinand VII, could, in any case, have reasserted his authority anywhere in America. The backing of the Alliance might, however, have encouraged him to more strenuous attempts. This the Monroe Doctrine effectively forestalled.

The United States was also among the first of the foreign governments to recognize the various Hispanic American countries as, one by one, they set up for themselves independent governments. Our government was indeed not always as prompt with recognition as some of them desired. The matter was not wholly simple, since we had to look also to our relations with Europe. Henry Clay, then in



the Senate, disappointed at not being given a post in the Cabinet, made a name for himself in Latin America and was a good deal of a thorn in the side of the administration as he eloquently extolled the patriots of South America and Mexico and demanded that we hold out to them the right hand of fellowship.

Under the circumstances, therefore, and in view of the notable strides which as a self-governing, federated republic our country had made during its fifty years of independence, it was most natural that the newly freed Hispanic colonies should be infected with the virus of republicanism. As one by one they attempted to formulate bases of self-government, they turned their eyes to the already great Anglo-Saxon republic of North America. All of the constitutions formulated by them during the first decade or two of their independence bear the impress of our own.

This wholly natural and explicable course proved, however, to be hedged about with difficulties. In the first place, although their colonial period had been much longer than our own, it had quite failed to produce the homogeneous and united population found in the North American colonies. This had been due both to institutions and to ethnic conditions. The institutions of Spain were purely autocratic. Unitary and unqualified control from above pervaded alike civic, economic, and spiritual realms. And it had been firmly imbedded during three long centuries. In the second place, only in one or two of the several units which became independent nations was the population dominantly of

European stock. In all the rest the real mass of the peoples were the aboriginal American inhabitants. These, being generally of a superior grade of culture to the nomadic Indians of what is now the United States, had not been dispossessed or exterminated, but merely subjugated. They kept their primitive culture and continued to till their ancestral lands. Moreover, they intermingled freely and extensively their blood with that of their conquerors. A huge mass of people had been thus produced who were neither colonists nor natives and whose social and economic status was as indeterminate as was their racial standing.

There was still another antinomy which, though in seeming merely theoretical and institutional, was destined to be fruitful of puzzlement and obstruction. The United States was a federation, perforce. The various colonies which had come together in a single government had previously developed not only a separate consciousness, which was the despair of George Washington and his fellow Federalists, but they had made much progress in self-government and in the perfecting of local civic institutions. This was exactly the opposite of the situation in Mexico, in Colombia, Chile, and the rest. There the unitary situation had been developed during the colonial period, and any division into sovereign states was artificial, at first, indeed, almost imaginary.

There were leading spirits not a few throughout Latin America who pointed out this discrepancy. They insisted that the federal principle which had enforced itself in the United States was alien to the

Latin American situation and that this made our form of government a misfit in those countries. They reënforced their contention by urging the unpreparedness of the masses of their people for participation in self-government. These people had not been educated for it—had, in fact, not been educated at all. And such training as they had received was away from, not toward self-government. The large majority of them were wholly illiterate.

All of this was manifestly true, but from the point of view of enthusiastic patriots it seemed to prove too much. It appeared to mean that those countries, though having obtained their liberty, could now have none of the fruits of it. This attitude became all the more determined as it transpired that the landholders, the capitalists, and the clergy, who represented to the common people the very tyranny from which they had, at the cost of blood and suffering, freed themselves, were invariably "centralists." No suggested alternative to the form of government which North America had adopted seemed to them free from the danger of reducing them once more to the state of subjection which Spain had imposed upon them.

So, for better for worse, Mexico, along with various republics of South America, setting aside emperors kings, dictators, and even unitary republican systems, adopted substantially the constitutional forms of the United States and set out upon the thorny undertaking of forcing their national life into these molds. Iturbide's "empire" was, as we have seen, ephemeral. He was not, to begin with, of the stuff

of which emperors are made, despite his vain fancy of a resemblance between himself and the first Napoleon. But even more serious as a handicap to his undertaking was the deep-seated repugnance of the Mexicans to kingly rule. So, in the very dawn of its national life, Mexico wedded itself to the republican ideal, and the nation's fidelity to that ideal throughout more than a century of blood and travail should command the admiration even of those who consider her efforts both foolish and futile.

Mexico's first constitution was adopted in 1824. It was an imitation, almost a reproduction, of our own instrument promulgated just forty years before. One disastrous exception was, as we have already seen, the inclusion of a provision for a state Church. In the nature of the case this constitution was not a compromise document, in which a group of proud colonies handed over grudgingly to a central government certain powers and prerogatives, definitely reserving to themselves all others not specified. Mexico was one. As "New Spain" she had been administered by the mother country as a single unit. If any "sovereign states" were to compose the proposed federation, they would have to be created by the federation. There had been civil subdivisions, to be sure, of a kind. But they were purely administrative and had no fixed relations, either to the central government or among themselves. The Church had gone somewhat further, with dioceses and archiepiscopal provinces. And there were outstanding cities scattered through the country fitted to serve as state capitals.

Out of this inchoate and undigested situation the separate states were duly carved, certain undeveloped sections remaining as Federal territories. For a hundred years these states have been trying to find out just what, alike in privileges and in obligations, their alleged sovereignty means, and just how they are related to one another and especially to the Federation. The Cabinet portfolio of "*Gobernación*" has to deal with this still lively and troublesome question and is, therefore, one of the most important posts in the Federal government.

The constitution of 1824 was produced by the liberal elements that had overthrown and driven out Iturbide. In spite of its formal recognition of the Church, the conservative group attacked it furiously. In a very short time, therefore, the liberals found themselves driven to accepting federation as an issue. From that time forward for two or three decades the conflict raged. Probably not all of those liberal leaders were blind to the considerations urged in favor of a more centralized system, after the manner of modern France or Chile. But the men who argued for that were the same who had been lukewarm or even hostile to independence, who had supported Iturbide, made overtures to Ferdinand VII, and who were suspected of being monarchists at heart. (A suspicion which was later justified when in 1864 they were instrumental in foisting upon Mexico an alien emperor, Maximilian.) So widely divided were the two groups that no compromise was possible.

Yet this very thing, this hopeless expedient of



compromise, was attempted by the first President elected under the new constitution. This man, known to history as Guadalupe Victoria, was named Manuel Félix Fernández. This he himself changed to Guadalupe Victoria, to signify his devotion to the patron saint of Mexico and to commemorate his success in battle. He was a stout patriot and a good soldier, but proved to be just the type of man which this bit of bombast would indicate—vain, willful, incompetent. The constitution had retained a provision which we ourselves tried and had to abandon, that the man receiving the next highest vote to that of the President should be Vice President. This, as was inevitable, placed in that office under Victoria a man not politically in sympathy with him, Don Nicolás Bravo. To make matters worse, the new president divided the Cabinet positions about equally between the federalists and the centralists. Among these latter was Lucas Alamán, one of the ablest men ever produced by Mexico, a confirmed clerical and aristocrat, who hated democracy in all its forms. A man of finished address, well educated, astute, a brilliant writer, for the next twenty years he was an influential factor in the public life of his country, of which he wrote a history that is still a standard authority. As might have been counted on, he was an implacable foe of the United States and did much to embitter relations between the two countries. He was the ablest advocate the clerical party in Mexico has ever had and next only to Santa Ana that party's chief reliance, both during

the periods when it was in power and when temporarily it was set aside by the liberals.

In spite of the attacks of the clericals and centralists and of serious disturbances in the government—President Guerrero, who succeeded Victoria, having been turned out of the government within less than two years by partisans of his Vice President, Anastasio Bustamante, who was then installed—the constitution held its way. In this revolution, however, as in that against Iturbide, there was one active agent who was destined to become Mexico's most sinister figure. This was a brigadier general named Antonio López de Santa Ana. Up to this point an ardent federalist and republican, he was as such in 1833 elected President, with Don Valentín Gómez Farías as Vice President. Under various pretexts Santa Ana persuaded Gómez Farías to take charge of the government while he retired to his plantation in the State of Vera Cruz. Farías was a convinced republican and forthwith began to put into operation important reforms aimed at the destruction of special privilege and monopoly and destined to relieve the burdens of the common people. As several of these hit the clergy a hard blow, these gentlemen prevailed on their military friends to organize an insurrection. Santa Ana, taking the field to combat this, was won over by the clericals and from that time became their champion. He displaced Farías and abrogated the offensive decrees.

But his supporters among the party of privilege, who were none other than the former monarchists and tories, urged him on, and by 1834 he commenced

his attack on the constitution itself, abolishing the Senate and declaring the House of Deputies competent to provide all necessary basic law. The trend toward centralism and tyranny alarmed the Texans, and they revolted. During Santa Ana's absence in a disastrous attempt to subdue them, the work of abrogating the constitution of 1824 went on, and in December of 1836 a new "Basic Law" was promulgated. It was the antithesis of the former instrument, which was never again operative. The states were abolished, the power of the executive was enhanced, and the special privileges of the clergy and the army were reaffirmed. Santa Ana, disgraced and disqualified by the Texas campaign, was forced into retirement, but when ten years later war arose between Mexico and the United States he was recalled and placed at the head of the army. In spite of his loss of that war, he retained his following and for a brief period figured again as dictator.

The republican elements were gathering strength, however, and by 1855 he was again and for the last time driven from power. A new civic leader was emerging in the person of Benito Juárez. Taking up the work of the earlier patriots, Gómez Farías, Melchor Ocampo, and others, this man once more led Mexico toward the assertion of the rights of the people. It was felt that a new constitution was in order. Mexico, along with most other countries of Latin America, looks for the basis of its jurisprudence not to the English Common Law, but to the Code Napoleon. Constitutions have, therefore, a dif-

ferent status with those people from that which we assign to them. When they become outworn or too much disfigured by the attacks of opposing parties, they are simply abandoned and a new one is framed. This is an attitude of mind which foreigners, especially of English stock and traditions, find hard to grasp, but one which it is essential for the student to keep before him, if he would understand the political development of Latin America.

The constitution of 1857 reflected the decidedly liberal sentiments of its framers. It followed in general outline that of 1824, reaffirming the principle of federalism, but made a point of attacking all special privileges and establishing equality before the law. It contained a bill of rights, which had been omitted from the former instrument, and it abolished the right of clergy and soldiers to separate courts of their own (*fueros*). This provision especially made it the object of a violent and unforgiving attack at the hands of the clericals. They secured the adherence of many military leaders, and a ten-year period of bloody conflicts ensued. This involved before it ended the introduction of the fateful empire of Maximilian, who was brought in by the clericals, aided by Napoleon III of France. But the republicans triumphed, and the administrations of Juárez, Lerdo, and Díaz followed, based upon the liberal federal constitution of 1857.

After Díaz was overthrown by Madero, and Madero by Huerta, Carranza led an armed revolt against the latter with the avowed purpose of reasserting the provisions of the constitution. He called his move-

ment "*Constitutionalista*," and ultimately it prevailed, placing him and his party in control of the country. The constitution had been vindicated. Nothing, therefore, would have seemed more natural than that, with such amendments duly adopted according to its own provisions as the new situation seemed to demand, it should have been restored to a new lease on life.

This course was not adopted. The instrument was sixty years old. Conditions had changed. There were important principles, ideals of the new liberalism, that called for assertion. The constitution had been good enough to die for, and many had died. But it seemed not quite adequate to live by. The state legislatures, which would have had to pass on amendments, were disorganized, many of them not functioning. In any case, reform by amendment was felt to be slow and unsatisfactory. The new wine must have a new wineskin. A genuine, true blue "*Constitutionalist*" convention was assembled, and the constitution of 1917 was formulated.

Few state documents in history have been more roughly handled. It fails, doubtless, always to draw a strict line between constitutional principles and police regulations. It adds to the provisions of the Reform Laws of Juárez, intended to curb the political activity of the clergy, regulations in regard to Churches and ministers so drastic and so unusual that some of them are deplored by the best friends of liberalism, both within Mexico and elsewhere. Its labor provisions are so favorable to the workers



that many hold them merely utopian, since if put into effect they would, it is alleged, wreck the whole present industrial fabric. Because of these provisions mainly, the instrument has been called by its critics socialistic and even bolshevistic. Certain provisions relating to subsoil values, especially petroleum, and others bearing on agrarian reforms have seemed to many investors in Mexican lands and oil to threaten the integrity of their rights as owners. These two groups of enactments have been the occasion of vigorous American protests and of long and controversial correspondence between the United States government and that of Mexico.

Yet up to the time of this writing, ten years after its promulgation, the constitution of 1917 retains its hold upon the affections of Mexico and remains virtually intact as adopted. Statutory regulations for applying its principles are still in process of enactment. Some of these seem to soften certain of the objectionable provisions. It may well be that desirable amendments will later be offered and adopted. But, in truth, the constitution as a whole is a better document than would be suspected in view of the chorus of criticism. It retains all the large and liberal principles of the constitutions of 1824 and 1857. It is, in fact, a virtual reënactment of the Juárez constitution, along with the *Leyes de Reforma* of 1859, incorporated therein as amendments in 1874. It is new only in minor matters, in its labor provisions and in the more specific enforcement of the anti-clerical laws. It is thus, in substance, the latest utterance of those liberal principles

which have been in process of formulation during a century of conflict against conservatism and privilege. It will not be radically altered until and unless the party of wealth and conservatism shall once more come into power. Countries that have already seen the liberties of the plain citizen prevail and become a part of their organic law should view with a friendly eye, excusing its minor imperfections, this charter of liberty for the Mexicans.

From the political point of view the new constitution of Mexico shares with that of Uruguay and other Latin American republics the trend toward diminishing the powers of the executive. The lack of experience in self-government of these peoples and the backward cultural stage of large masses of their population has left them during most of the century of their independence a prey to the adventurous military chieftain. Too often the transfer of political control, seemingly from one party or group to another, has been but the exchanging of one dictator calling himself a conservative for another posing as a liberal. To provide against this tendency, which has become a veritable curse, are the provisions that a president cannot succeed himself and that an officer in the army or an official in the federal government cannot even become a candidate without first resigning. Uruguay in her new constitution adds to the executive power a Council of Administration which shares in the power hitherto belonging to the President. The powers of the legislative branch are augmented. Provision is also made for a "permanent committee" of Congress to sit during the

intervals between regular sessions, usually empowered under certain conditions to call a special session.

A special effort is made to secure equal rights of all citizens before the law. The laws in Mexico (and other Spanish American countries) were so long made and administered by the small property-holding class, and were thus so strongly tinctured with favoritism, that to correct this evil has been no small undertaking. It required half a century to abolish the *fueros*, the right of the clergy and of the army to have courts of their own, which gave them complete exemption from responsibility to those of the government. It is in line with this that the new labor provisions were enacted. The labor unions had by 1917 become the outstanding leaders of a growing middle class. Such a class had before had only a precarious, hardly more than a nominal, existence. There were, indeed, a considerable number of small farmers (*rancheros*) who owned their own land. In the cities the mixed-blood element predominated, more intelligent and ambitious than the Indians, but without the wealth of entailed property and the social standing of the creoles. They were merchants, small manufacturers, lawyers, teachers, and members of other professional classes. But their number was small and their political power negligible.

When, however, the growth of industrial life brought with it the multiplication of factory workers, and these little by little became organized into unions, there developed rapidly a class consciousness. The labor organizations taught their members

the secret of coöperation and the arts of democratic procedure. It was not long, thus, till they became, as they are now, the leaders of middle-class sentiment. They are alert to their interests and are becoming aware of the value of political action. When there is an election, they may be counted on to use the ballot. Their present influence in governmental affairs will be viewed with approval or with alarm according to the angle occupied by the observer. Once they effect a union with the *rancheros* and with the middle class *mestizos* in the cities, there will begin to be in Mexico a real middle class.

One cannot read the labor provisions of the new constitution without allowing that, whether or not they are economically sound, they are certainly meant to be humanitarian. The chapter dealing with "Labor and Social Welfare" is one of the last in the document, but as our general view has led us into the discussion of it, it may as well be more fully outlined here. It begins by laying down what are called basic principles to be observed by the federal and state legislatures in the enactment of labor laws. These establish the eight-hour day, the rules for night hours (a maximum of seven); regulations as to miners, one day of rest in seven; the "living wage," payment in legal money; overtime wages, employers' liability, installation of safety devices and proper sanitation, etc. The right to organize and to strike is recognized as basic, and provision is made for arbitrating disputes. Certain types of contracts are declared illegal—a blow at peonage and

forced labor of every sort, long a burden to Mexico. A laborer's indebtedness to his employer is personal and cannot be charged to his family. I have reserved for the last the article dealing with women who work. It provides that for three months prior to confinement, in case one is about to become a mother, she shall be relieved of tasks requiring heavy physical exertion, and following confinement she is to have a full month's vacation, without losing her position or her seniority standing and at regular wages. Afterward, so long as necessary, she shall be allowed half an hour twice a day to nurse and care for her baby. All of which doubtless will seem to the old-school type of employers more of the nature of philanthropy than of business.

The land provisions of the constitution have been dealt with in the previous chapter. This separate treatment was given them because they so manifestly bear upon what is fundamental to the future welfare of the country. Its destiny is, and has ever been, inextricably bound up with agriculture. Next to them, perhaps even ahead of them, in producing friction with the citizens of the United States, is the new classification given to oil. Under the old Spanish law—a principle taken up and incorporated also into the Napoleonic Code—a distinction was made between the surface value of land and the subsoil values. "Treasures of the subsoil," to use the Spanish phrase, were not transferred to individuals who became owners of the surface, but remained a part of the public domain.

While Mexico was a Spanish colony these mineral



rights belonged to the Crown. Permits were issued for the development of such "treasures," and the Crown shared in the products. Hence the name of its share—one-fifth, as a rule—was "royalty." When Mexico became an independent federation these Crown rights did not pass to the states, but remained in the federal government. The plan of farming them out to concessionnaires has worked well. It should perhaps be remarked again that the Spanish word *concesión* does not always carry the implication of special privilege. Normally it simply means a permit.

When a prospector discovers gold, for example, whether on the public domain or on private property, he enters a claim at the nearest federal land office "denouncing" land sufficient for its development. (There are fixed rules governing the size and number of claims, the requirements for working them, etc.) As a partner of the government he then has certain rights of eminent domain, very favorable to the development of his enterprise. He pays to the government royalties instead of taxes and is thus freed from local annoyances and exactions. He holds, not a title, but a permit, *concesión*. This, however, he can sell, subdivide, bequeath, and otherwise dispose of as if it were real property. In a very sound sense it is.

All the enormous mining industry of Mexico has been developed under this law, or, at least, under laws and decrees based on this principle. The plan has, indeed, much to recommend it, as over against the common law assumption that the owner of the

land owns all that is under the land. Inherited from Spain, it has been in effect in Mexico during all the four hundred years since the arrival there of the Europeans. It is firmly established as a constitutional principle.

Naturally, there were some products that seemed to belong primarily to the surface. Sand, gravel, adobe, building stone, clay were so listed and were excepted from the subsoil grouping, though often taken from far below the surface. Petroleum was not originally listed among the subsoil products for the sufficient reason that it was not then known. When oil products began to be of commercial and industrial importance, attention was first given to considerable layers of liquid or semi-liquid asphalt. The oil of the Mexican field having an asphalt base and being, as has since been found, subject to very heavy pressure, has oozed out in places. Slow evaporation of the volatile elements left these surface layers of "pitch." It was probably due to this circumstance that a law was passed by the Federal Legislature in 1884 listing oil products as belonging to the owner of the soil.

Very soon thereafter, dating from the year 1900, the rich oil fields of Mexico began to be exploited, chiefly by American capital and initiative. They proved to be so productive that large areas of land were bought and leased for future development by individuals and by corporations, still predominantly foreign, and the industry assumed national and international importance. While it was in full swing the new constitution was formulated. The framers

of the instrument took—very naturally, from their point of view—the ground that oil coming from two thousand feet below the surface, is a “sub-soil treasure.” They held that the statute of 1884 was in contravention of a constitutional principle and therefore void. So in their list of subsoil products they included petroleum and all its subsidiary elements and declared them the property of the nation. In this they were undoubtedly influenced also by a certain measure of uneasiness at seeing so much of their country’s resources passing into the hands of foreigners

This simple procedure produced an uproar which has not yet subsided. From the first the Mexicans have insisted that it was not their purpose to take over producing oil wells. Their constitution itself prohibits retroactive legislation. They only meant to establish a basis for future developments. It has seemed impossible, however, for the American oil companies to take the view of the whole subject held by the Mexican legislators and the governments which since 1917 have successively been trying to enforce the constitution. In this they have had the consistent backing of the Department of State at Washington.

The controversy at this writing seems to hinge chiefly upon the lands bought for oil development on which no development has yet taken place. The owners insist that, since the land was purchased solely for the oil rights, for the government now to take over those rights is to deprive them of property without due process. The reply of the Mexican

government is that, since these owners can still have preferential rights to develop the oil on those lands, and since the proposed plans will give them the oil the same as if the wells belonged to them, they paying royalties instead of taxes, they will really suffer no injury. And as to property, where oil wells have not yet been brought in, there is no proof that such property exists. There are indications at this writing that the controversy is about to be composed, and one may venture to hope that by the time these lines reach the reader it will be a thing of the past.

Such in general outline is the Mexican constitution of 1917. It is a hastily composed and in a way a defective and partisan document. Yet, in spite of these defects, it gives substantial expression to the aspirations of the Mexican people. By judicious amendment from time to time, and by wise regulation through legislative and judicial action, it may well serve for years to come as a satisfactory and progressive basis for the life of the nation.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CALLES ADMINISTRATION—MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES.

THE De la Huerta insurrection gathered up into itself about all the disaffected elements then existing in Mexico. In particular, it drew off those military officers who valued their rank and their pay more highly than their patriotism. Formerly ardent friends and supporters of General Obregón, the devotion of these men had already begun to cool when he as President resolutely set about reducing the army to a peace basis. The suppression of the De la Huerta revolt, therefore, had the effect of eliminating these men from the situation. A considerable number of them, before it was over, as we have seen, faced firing squads—some whose services to their country should have brought them to a worthier end. Others left Mexico and have since remained in exile. General Calles, who was busy with his presidential campaign, promptly gave that up when the war began and hurried to the support of the President. He had, in accordance with the law, resigned his commission when he announced his candidacy. Now he was recommissioned and rendered valuable services in putting down the rebellion. It was understood already that the friends of Obregón would support Calles. So when peace was restored he once more resigned from the army and



went on with his political campaign. He was elected without serious opposition and began his term the first of December, 1924. At the time of this writing he has just passed the half-way point.

His first year went by peacefully enough. He made drastic reductions in the number of civil employees and in the standing army, setting the note of economy and efficiency as his main objective. With far less reputation for brilliancy in military leadership than his predecessor in the presidency, he has shown a decision, a vigor, and an energy in civil administration that have been rare in the history of his country. Born in poverty and having passed his young manhood in humble ways of life, including service as a school teacher, he has a keen interest in the welfare of the unprivileged classes among Mexico's citizens. He has espoused heartily the much-ridiculed labor provisions of the constitution of 1917 and has the united support of the labor unions of the country. These are now, as I have before pointed out, the largest coherent group of self-conscious and organized citizens in the republic. Without yielding to their demands when he thinks them unreasonable or against the welfare of the public—he has dealt vigorously with one or two strikes affecting the public service—President Calles nevertheless holds their confidence and good will and in connection with anything approaching a crisis has their unanimous and hearty support.

Next to bettering the conditions of the industrial working people, President Calles has interested himself in that other even larger unprivileged class, the

farm laborers. This interest has been shown in promoting agrarian reform and in improving educational conditions. In connection with the agrarian development he has first sought to carry out the two lines of land distribution which I have already described, the breaking up of the larger landed estates and the return to village communities of their *ejidos* or communal lands.

The plan for reducing the size of the large estates through the action of state governments has proved so cumbersome that not a great deal has as yet been accomplished. The law itself will probably have to be amended and the whole matter placed in the hands of the Federal government. The restoration of *ejidos*, begun under President Obregón, has proved at once more feasible and more picturesque. Large numbers of small towns and villages have had their communal lands handed back to them. The federal offices are overwhelmed with the applications of others who are eager for the same favor. The President and his associates have gone here and there over the whole country participating in the festivals organized to celebrate these happy events, and a profound impression has been made on the imagination of the ignorant and downtrodden farming population. They feel that indeed a new day for them is dawning and for the first time in their history are refusing to follow blindly the leadership of their priests. Many of these, being humble men themselves, sympathize with the longings of their people, and a visible rift is opening between the body of poor and unprivileged parish priests and the higher clergy,

who are obliged, whatever might be their own patriotic sympathies to follow rigidly the dictates of Rome.

Under orders from the Vatican, the archbishops and bishops and others of the higher ranks in the Mexican Catholic clergy began in 1926 a stubborn resistance to the provisions of the Mexican constitution. This culminated the first of August in their ordering all parish priests to desist from the public exercise of their functions rather than comply with the statute which on that date went into effect. The controversy from that time forward grew more and more bitter. Armed bands appearing here and there in the spring of 1927 in rebellion against the government made use of slogans and of banners which indicated that they meant their rebellion mainly to be in support of the Church. The Church leaders protested that such military activities had not been promoted or even countenanced by them. But after a peculiarly atrocious attack which took place in April upon a train carrying many passengers between Guadalajara and Mexico City, in which all members of the armed escort and many unarmed passengers were killed, two archbishops and six or more bishops were arrested by the government and given the choice of leaving the country or standing trial for complicity in the rebellion. They chose exile and were sent at once to the United States.

This took place just before Easter. When Holy Week came, a time universally marked in Mexico, as in other Catholic countries, by sumptuous religious exercises, for the first time in four hundred

years of the history of that country the churches were silent. No bells were rung. The only illumination for the interiors of the churches, which the government demanded should be kept open, was a candle here and there, by the light of which believers could come for their private devotions. In some churches a layman read the Scripture lessons or led in reciting the rosary. It was a spectacle which left the people of Mexico dumb with astonishment. Many devout Catholics resorted to the Protestant temples, where special services were conducted as usual.

In the matter of satisfying the Indian villagers with *ejidos* the Calles government has found opposition almost as stubborn as that of the Church in connection with the laws affecting its interests. Under the constitution of 1857 and the laws later promulgated by Díaz, the lands that had formerly belonged to these municipalities or communes had changed hands, many of them several times. Some of them belonged to citizens of the United States. The owners have objected not only to the expropriation of the lands, but to the form of payment which the Mexican government has adopted. These payments are made in government bonds, whereas the landowners have demanded cash. In this demand those of them who are American citizens have had the backing of their government. This is one phase of the controversy between our government and that of Mexico which has gone on most of the time the last ten years. When by injunctions or by diplomatic pressure President Calles has been held

back in the locations where foreign interests are involved, he has simply deferred action there and turned to some other region where his only obstacle has been the resistance of Mexican landholders. This he has, by one means and another, been able to overcome, at least to the extent of going on with the work of restoring community lands to the eager villagers. The fruit of this conciliation of the lowly farm laborers, along with the industrial workers in the cities, is seen in that his government has proved able to weather opposition of a kind that would have overthrown any other that Mexico has had the past hundred years. It is even yet too early to forecast the final outcome, but the events of 1926 and of the first half of 1927 have exhibited a strength in the progressive elements in Mexico which seems to augur well for the country's future.

Two other lines of activity have specially engaged the attention of President Calles. One has been the engineering works by the Federal government for the reclamation of waste lands. This means in Mexico principally irrigation works. The other is the building up of popular education. For both these causes he has a real enthusiasm. To aid in the development of agriculture a Federal Land Bank has been established, and as a part of the national educational system several practical agricultural schools have already been founded, and others will follow.

Under the guidance of Dr. Moisés Sáenz as Director (his doctorate is from Columbia University) the Federal government is once more grappling with the enormous task of educating Mexico's



citizenship. The work is going forward so swiftly that statistics, if given here, would already be out of date by the time this volume is printed. The issues as between Federal and state or local control of schools have been for the present brushed aside. All are uniting in a common endeavor, the Federal government leading. The primary immediate purpose is to combat illiteracy. In the villages and rural sections the problem has been attacked with more vigor than formality. The work is looked upon as a patriotic service that partakes of the missionary spirit. Innumerable volunteer teachers, "educational missionaries," they are called, at minimum wages and with the most meager material equipment possible are being sent out to teach at least the rudiments of citizenship, hygiene, and manual arts as well as reading and writing. The devotion of these teachers, many of them mere boys and girls, is matched by the enthusiasm of their pupils. Mexico is in the midst of a widespread and truly popular educational revival. The Protestant missions, through their educational work and by reason of their ready acceptance of the newly enacted laws of the country, have gained a place in public esteem which they never before had. Students and graduates from their schools are prominent among the educational missionaries of whom the government is availing itself. Incidentally it may be remarked that the vigorous opposition of the Protestant Churches in the United States to any policy of the American government which might lead us into an armed conflict with Mexico has become known south

of the Rio Grande and has earned for those bodies the gratitude and good will of the whole Mexican nation, more especially of those in governmental circles.

Concerning the relations between the United States and Mexico I will speak briefly and in general terms. Several substantial volumes have been written on this subject, the latest bringing the discussion down to the time of Carranza.<sup>1</sup> I shall confine my observations chiefly to developments that have followed the adoption of the constitution of 1917.

That constitution, as I have already explained was meant to embody the ideals of the revolutionary movement, begun under Madero, checked for a time by the usurpation of Victoriano Huerta and later, 1913-15, triumphantly carried through by Carranza. A year later work was begun on the new constitution, which was duly promulgated on "Constitution Day," February 5, 1917. The day had long been observed as a national holiday in honor of the constitution of 1857, proclaimed exactly sixty years before.

Already for several years, from the beginning of the Carranza movement, in fact, many American oil producers had shown hostility to the Constitutionalist party. They formed an association to promote and protect their interests. Under its direction a publicity bureau had been opened in Washington, and an adroit and persistent campaign had been conducted to poison the mind of the

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<sup>1</sup>"The United States and Mexico," by J. Fred Rippy.

American people against Carranza personally and against the political principles for which his party stood. The injuries suffered here and there in Mexico to their property and to their persons and lives by American citizens during the period of disorder and civil war were made to appear as wholly the fault of the Constitutionalists. These were pictured as illiterate freebooters and bandits. This campaign was made all the more bitter after a proclamation was issued by the First Chief in 1915 outlining the policies which were to be put in force in connection with the production of oil.

Naturally, complaints from so influential a source, echoed as they were by the press throughout the country, came to the attention of the American government. President Wilson was openly sympathetic with what he correctly believed were the aspirations and the struggles of the unprivileged masses of Mexico and was disinclined to interfere. Besides, about the same time he was growing keenly aware of the gathering cloud of war with Germany and was, consequently, unwilling to divide the interests and the strength of his country by bringing on trouble in another quarter. But his political enemies in Congress kept up a continuous barrage of opposition, of oratory, and of efforts to force his hand in connection with Mexico. It was this pressure which obtained his reluctant consent to two acts of seeming aggression, neither of them productive of any good except temporarily to quiet his antagonists—namely, the taking of Vera Cruz (1914) and the Pershing expedition in 1916. For the rest he remained stub-

bornly loyal to his much-ridiculed plan of "watchful waiting." He thus fell heir to no little abuse, in Mexico for interfering as much as he did, at home for not interfering more.

The facts were and are that Mexico's ills are too deep-seated to be remedied by anything that the United States might do. Had armed intervention taken place, say in 1916, when we came nearest to it—or at any other time—it would simply have resulted in another war with Mexico. The several factions there would have laid aside their differences and united against a common foe. Any suggestion that our soldiers would have been welcomed in Mexico as emissaries of peace was pure fancy, a product of the imagination of people without a proper understanding of Mexican psychology. In such a war, had it come, we should doubtless have been ultimately victorious, though just what complications might have ensued in our war with Germany may well give the student pause.

Even after a victory in arms, however, the problem of what to do with and for Mexico would have been ten times graver than before. No government set up there under the protection of our soldiers would have lasted a moment after those soldiers were withdrawn. A permanent armed protectorate would thus have been inevitable. It could not have endured long without bringing forward the problem of annexation. The forcible annexation of all of Mexico's territory would have brought the United States a throng of perplexities far greater than any that an independent Mexico can possibly produce, and the

resulting suspicion and ill will throughout Latin America would have altered profoundly and for all time the future inter-American relations, political, economic, commercial, and sentimental. We were, in fact, on the edge of an abyss. It will be to our discredit as a nation if ever again we allow the clamor of a few interested citizens of our country to force us to face so grave a dilemma.

It is but the simple truth to say that the people of Mexico are sincerely desirous of our friendship. Even before the tremendous exhibition of our military power called out by the World War they were well aware of their comparative weakness. But they do not yield on that account anything of their own determination to preserve at any cost their national integrity and independence. Perhaps they have asserted that determination all the more frequently and positively just because they scented danger in our overwhelming numerical and economic preponderance. But even the much-maligned Carranza was careful never to overstep the bounds of polite and respectful language. A reading, especially in the Spanish original, of all his utterances throughout the period of stress and controversy will establish that and will also vindicate him from the oft-repeated charge of pro-Germanism. He was, throughout the entire war, rigidly neutral, neutral in just the sense that President Wilson insisted upon during the two years of our own neutrality.

Obregón and Calles, during their administrations, have adhered to the same tradition. They are not willing to abate one jot of Mexico's sovereignty, but



they are willing, even strongly desirous, to be on good terms with the United States. As early as 1848 we were, along with Mexico, signatories to a treaty, which in the most positive terms committed us to arbitration as a manner of settling any controversy which may arise between the two nations. The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, by which the Mexican War was brought to an end, contains the following clause:

“If unhappily any disagreement should hereafter arise between the Governments of the two republics, whether with respect to the interpretation of any stipulation in this treaty, or with respect to any other particular concerning the political or commercial relations of the two nations, the said Governments, in the name of those nations, do promise each other that they will endeavor, in the most earnest and sincere manner, to settle differences so arising and to preserve the state of peace and friendship in which the two countries are now placing themselves, using for this end mutual representations and pacific negotiations. And if by these means they should not be able to come to an agreement, a resort shall not, on this account, be had to reprisals, aggression, or hostility of any kind, by the one republic against the other, until the Government of that which feels itself aggrieved shall have maturely considered, in the spirit of peace and good neighborhood, whether it would not be better that such difference should be settled by the arbitration of commissioners appointed on each side, or by that of a friendly nation. And should such course be proposed by either party,

it shall be acceded to by the other, unless deemed by it altogether incompatible with the nature of the difference or the circumstances of the case."

Let it be noted that this provision for arbitration antedates by many decades the numerous agreements of the kind, on the part of our country and of others, which have later been entered into. Also that this was a treaty framed largely by a victorious nation in the very capital of the vanquished. Its terms, therefore, cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be thought of as forced upon us. We entered into this arbitration agreement voluntarily. What will be thought of us, what shall we think of ourselves, if now, by ignoring and disregarding so solemn a compact, we prove ourselves less generous, less liberal, than were our ancestors of eighty years ago? Yet the clamor for intervention in Mexico—which means, let that never be forgotten, war with Mexico—proposes exactly that.

There have been, it is true, sporadic outbursts of anti-American feeling in Mexico. It has not been directed at us as a people so much as provoked by the attitude and the conduct of certain individuals and groups of American citizens and by suspected tendencies on the part of our government. Many men who have large interests in Mexico have shown little consideration for the feelings of the Mexicans. Their efforts to provoke our government to hostile action have been well known. Their control of large holdings of Mexico's economic resources has excited a degree of uneasiness there. Under such circumstances a little violent language here and

there is only natural. But these sporadic outbursts are more than offset by the consistent cordiality of the Mexican people as a whole and their traditional and undiminished hospitality. Any of our citizens who go to that country in a spirit of good will are received with open arms. Our teachers, our students, our commercial agents, our casual travelers and occasional visitors meet with nothing but cordiality.

Even more consistently have the representatives of the Mexican government labored to preserve good relations between the two countries. The volume of commerce, both of exports and of imports, increases year by year and has now reached unprecedented proportions. The young men and women of Mexico come in ever-growing numbers to study in our colleges or to receive training in business. A large contingent of manual laborers annually find their way from Mexico to the United States, many of them to remain. Their services are highly valued, especially in our Southwestern States. And as I write these lines the President of Mexico has again gone on record as desirous of submitting to arbitration, according to the terms of the long-standing treaty, all the matters that have been the occasion of friction between his government and ours, including any claims that any citizens of the United States advance for damages caused by the prolonged civil disorders there or in any other way.

The way seems thus to be open and the promise good for an era of understanding and mutual good will between these two neighbor nations. The people

of the United States are better acquainted with Mexico than ever before. They have yet much to learn, and some things, the fruit of the era of anti-Mexican propaganda, to unlearn. Mexico has not yet solved all the problems of self-government and may have other seasons of disorder and distress. We can well afford, in such cases, to restrain any impatience because the resulting disorders interfere with the comfort and diminish the income of a few of our citizens. That is not their prime motive, nor in any sense their cause. Mexicans, as may be seen, suffer more from them than do our people. Let it be ours to view the struggles of our neighbors with sympathy, and to coöperate, when and as we may, with those elements in Mexico's population who are striving to bring to their people the blessings of national peace, strength, and well-being which we have so long and so richly enjoyed. For, after all, it is in part their proximity to us which makes the Mexicans so dissatisfied with the ignorance, the poverty, the national inefficiency which have hitherto been their lot.

I had rather let this volume end upon a note of confidence and of hope than on one of warning. But just at the time when I was engaged upon these closing paragraphs the President of the United States announced formally that his government felt bound to enter upon an era of special relationships with the countries of the Caribbean on this side of Panama. He did not specifically exclude Mexico, though the context of his remarks seems to prove that he meant so to do. He has accordingly in-

augurated a virtual protectorate over Nicaragua. It is outside the purview of my discussion to take up that matter. But I must point out that while the small republics of Central America may agree, whether reluctantly or not, to have their affairs supervised by the "Colossus of the North," we are entering upon a policy for the alleged safeguarding of our Caribbean interests that, since Mexico is also a Caribbean country, will be fraught with grave danger should we in any way, directly or indirectly, venture to apply the same standards in dealing with her. Mexico is, comparatively speaking, a large nation, and the Mexicans are a proud people. She may be trusted to resist to the last ditch, as applied to herself, the type of benevolent imperialism to which we seem to be committing ourselves in our dealings with the republics of Central America.

NOTE.—After concluding the above final chapter, I took advantage of an unexpected opportunity and spent two weeks the latter part of August (1927) in Mexico, most of the time in Mexico City. Nothing that I observed seems to call for any change in what has already been written. But this note is added that I may share with the reader at least two distinct impressions which I received. The first is of the marked improvement in the condition of the manual laborers. They dress better, are better fed, and in bearing and manner reflect a distinct advance in morale. As contrasted with conditions familiar to me three decades ago, when I was a resident of the republic of Mexico, the change was of



the nature of a revolution. This refers to the wage earners in the cities. I had no time to visit the country districts.

The second observation was even more startling. The Roman Catholic Church has suffered an enormous loss of prestige. The interdict—withdrawal of the parish priests from active service in their churches—proved to be a costly error. The people are learning to get on without them and rather like it. Then the countenancing of a fruitless armed rebellion, resulting, as noted above, in the exile of most of the higher clergy, was likewise a disastrous blow. The average Mexican, like average humans elsewhere, likes to watch a contest. And when it is over he cheers the winner. This time there was no question as to who won. The government, in a conflict which it did not desire and would have been glad to avoid, once its hand was forced, triumphed at every point. The lesson has not been lost.

I ought to add, perhaps, a line on the unfortunate outcome of the premature presidential campaign. Although the election was still more than a year in the future, three candidates were, when I was in Mexico, already actively in the field. All were generals in the army, and one, Alvaro Obregón, was an ex-President. Charging that the government was actively supporting Obregón, the other two, Generals Arnulfo Gómez and Francisco Serrano, united to bring on an armed uprising. It was more than suspected that the Catholic elements, who had, as we have seen, tried the same thing in the spring of 1927, gave their support to this movement. The

owners of oil wells and the large landholders, hostile to certain of the Calles policies, were probably at least sympathetic. Enough units of the army were led into the rebellion to make the government's problem a serious one. But the President had secured information and was forewarned. He moved swiftly, and in a few weeks the uprising was suppressed and its leaders captured and executed. This latter measure has caused a good deal of unfavorable comment, most of it beside the point. These men were punished, not for being candidates for public office, but as traitors, engaged in an armed attack on the duly constituted government.

The activity of the Calles government in promoting education I found to be receiving much praise. The agricultural colleges and the rural primary schools are points of special emphasis. Dr. Sáenz, a man of high ideals and thorough preparation, is giving his attention to the rural schools. They are looked upon as civic missionary work as well as educational. The report of the Secretary of Education to Congress when it met the first of September shows a total of 2,952 such schools, with 3,433 teachers and a student enrollment of 206,383.

The preponderance of the United States in the commerce of Mexico has become, I found, overwhelming. Practically all of the imported goods exposed for sale were from this country.



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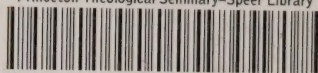






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